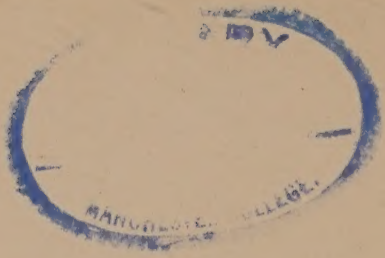
INTRODUCTION TO THEME-WRITING

J. B. FLETCHER AND G. R. CARPENTER



INTRODUCTION

TO

THEME-WRITING

BY

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PREFACE.

THE lectures that form the basis of this book were delivered before the Freshman class at Harvard College in the spring of 1893 by Mr. J. B. Fletcher. Learning that he did not intend to publish them in any form himself, I obtained his permission to issue them as a text-book for use in my own classes and in those of several other teachers who had known them in manuscript. In adapting my friend's work to a new purpose I have frequently been obliged to change the form of the original lectures, to rearrange the matter contained in them, and to add fresh material. The result has been a joint production, which will be found, we think, to contain much of the subject-matter necessary for students who have completed the introductory course in rhetoric usually prescribed at the beginning of the Freshman year.

G. R. C.

NOVEMBER, 1893.

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INTRODUCTION.

1. **The Purpose of this Book.** — A first course in rhetoric usually deals with the choice of words, with the ways in which they are combined into sentences, with the structure of paragraphs and of the whole composition, and with the most important qualities of style. At the end of such a general course the pupil is ready for work of a different character: he is prepared to examine the various kinds of writing which men are naturally called upon to undertake or to appreciate, and to search for the sort of treatment that is particularly appropriate to each. For it is obvious that an argument, for example, is not constructed in the same fashion as a book-review, nor is the aim which we have in mind when we are describing a scene the same as that we have in view when we tell a story. Our study of the kinds of composition, then, is simply an attempt to discover what sort of treatment is appropriate to certain important varieties of subject-matter which we are continually called upon to handle in written composition.

2. **Benefits to be Derived from this Course of Study.** — From a course of study like this we may expect to derive two kinds of benefit: first, we shall get a

clear idea of the methods actually employed in several important species of composition, and some experience in applying them to work of our own; second, we shall learn to appreciate critically certain *genres* of literature.

3. **The Kinds of Composition.** — The kinds of composition which we shall consider are Letter-writing, Translation, Description, Narration, Criticism, Exposition, Argument, and Persuasion. Of these, Description, Narration, Exposition, Argument, and Persuasion are the most important, for they may be considered as constituting, in a large sense, the elements of composition, in as much as nothing can be written in prose or verse that is not either one of them or a combination of two or more of them. The functions of these five elements are the following: Description produces in the mind of the reader a picture, as it were, of certain objects or persons; Narration gives an account of an event or a series of events; Exposition explains the theory underlying a group of connected facts; Argument convinces the reader of the truth of a proposition, or propositions; and Persuasion induces the reader to adopt a certain line of action. An account of the view from Mt. Washington, for instance, would be a description; an account of the ascent of Mt. Washington, a narrative; an account of the way in which a volcano is formed, or acts, would be an exposition; the proof of the fact that volcanic action has a direct connection with

changes in the bed of the sea would be an argument; and a political address that won a man's vote would be an effective piece of persuasion. These five kinds of composition, it will be further noticed, fall into two groups, one of which has to do with *things* and the other with *thoughts*. Description tells us what things *are;* Narration, what they *do;* Exposition, on the other hand, expounds to us the nature of certain thoughts; Argument convinces us of the truth or falsity of certain thoughts; and Persuasion makes certain thoughts a stimulus to action. This distinction we shall examine later in greater detail.

4. Mutual Relations of the Elements of Composition. — These five elements of composition frequently shade into each other, so that one can scarcely distinguish, for instance, where Description leaves off and Narration begins. It is rare, too, that we meet with any one of them in its most effective form uncombined with some one of the others. Description, for example, is sometimes best performed by means of Narration, and, as we shall see, good Narration does not often dispense with the use of Description.

5. The Principle of Composition. — The fundamental principle on which we shall base our study of the kinds of composition is that of relativity. A composition must be judged, not by any fixed rule or canon, but simply and solely by its effectiveness for the purpose in hand. Now this effectiveness for the purpose in hand depends on three variable quantities,

as it were: the precise object in view, the individuality of the writer, and the capacity of the reader. The principle of relativity makes it necessary that we should, in practising any of the kinds of composition, decide (1) just what treatment will be most appropriate to the subject-matter in general; (2) what treatment will most clearly bring out the particular ideas or impressions of the subject-matter which exist in the individual mind of the author; and (3) what treatment will make most clear this definite subject seen from a given point of view to a particular class of readers or hearers. If we neglect the first consideration, we may find ourselves writing in verse — as frequently happens — what more properly belongs in prose, or making a sonnet out of what is but material for a ballad. If we neglect the second, we may find ourselves writing that which we are under the impression we *should* think, not what we really *do* think. If we neglect the third, we may fall into the uncomfortable error of informing the public at great length of what it already knows, or of talking or writing in a way that it cannot understand or appreciate.

EXERCISE.

I. Discuss:[1]

1. The twofold value of the study of the kinds of composition.

[1] The subjects that follow are suitable topics for written exercises or extempore themes.

2. The kinds of writing as distinguished from each other.

3. The interdependence of the kinds of composition.

4. The ground principle of composition and the three elements of this ground principle.

II. Do the principles of the novelist's art, as laid down in the following passages by one of the most successful writers of our time, agree with what is said above about the fundamental principle of composition?

"Il faut admettre avec un égal intérêt ces théories d'art si différentes et juger les œuvres qu'elles produisent, uniquement au point de vue de leur valeur artistique en acceptant *a priori* les idées générales d'où elles sont nées.

"Contester le droit d'un écrivain de faire une œuvre poétique ou une œuvre réaliste, c'est vouloir le forcer à modifier son tempérament, récuser son originalité, ne pas lui permettre de se servir de l'œil et de l'intelligence que la nature lui a donnés.

"Lui réprocher de voir les choses belles ou laides, petites ou épiques, gracieuses ou sinistres, c'est lui reprocher d'être conformé de telle ou telle façon et de ne pas avoir une vision concordant avec la nôtre.

"Laissons-le libre de comprendre, d'observer, de concevoir comme il lui plaira, pourvu qu'il soit un artiste. Devenons poétiquement exaltés pour juger un idéaliste et prouvons-lui que son rêve est médiocre, banal, pas assez fou ou magnifique. Mais si nous jugeons un natu-

raliste, montrons-lui en quoi la vérite dans la vie diffère de la vérité dans son livre.

. . . . . .

"Ayant, en outre, posé cette vérité qu'il n'y a pas, de par le monde entier, deux grains de sable, deux mouches, deux mains ou deux nez absolument pareils, il [Flaubert] me forçait à exprimer, en quelques phrases, un être ou un objet de manière à le particulariser nettement, à le distinguer de tous les autres êtres ou de tous les autres objets de même race ou de même espèce.

"Quand vous passez, me disait-il, devant un épicier assis sur sa porte, devant un concierge qui fume sa pipe, devant une station de fiacres, montrez-moi cet épicier et ce concierge, leur pose, toute leur apparence physique, contenant aussi, indiquée par l'adresse de l'image, toute leur nature morale, de façon à ce que je ne les confonde avec aucun autre épicier ou avec aucun autre concierge, et faites-moi voir, par un seul mot, en quoi un cheval de fiacre ne ressemble pas aux cinquante autres qui le suivent et le précèdent."

GUY DE MAUPASSANT: *Pierre et Jean.*

THEME-WRITING.

CHAPTER I.

LETTER-WRITING.

1. The Impersonal or Business Letter. — On one very common kind of composition, letter-writing, we shall find it necessary to touch only very briefly. The forms of letter-writing certainly do not concern us here,[1] and we will confine ourselves strictly to the consideration of the kinds of subject-matter which letters may appropriately contain, and to the qualities of style they may show. Letters are, roughly speaking, of two kinds, impersonal and personal. In the impersonal or business letter the writer restrains himself from all extraneous adornment of style, or even from any particular display of individuality. Here merit lies entirely in extreme clearness and conciseness, and the author's private reflections or comments are best left out altogether, unless they directly concern the point at issue. As the indispensable qualities of the good impersonal letter, or one that concerns information solely, are clearness and conciseness, it will readily be seen that the char-

[1] See Carpenter's *Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition*, Advanced Course, Exercise I.

acteristics of the letter of information do not differ from those of ordinary narrative, description, or exposition.

2. The Impersonal or Business Letter: Courtesy. — The man who has been trained in action rather than in thought frequently writes better letters of information than the finished scholar or the more meditative student, because his mind grasps more easily and represents more clearly the points which are of prime importance as regards action. There is, however, one trait, that of courtesy, which invariably distinguishes the letter of the man who merely wishes to communicate information in the most compact form possible, and the letter of the man who, though expressing himself briefly, does not express himself bluntly, rudely, or with undue and indecorous haste. In our times, of course, we should scarcely think of addressing even a total stranger in quite such elaborately dignified phraseology as that which Dr. Johnson used in the following very beautiful note to his friend and neighbor, Edmund Allen, on the day he was stricken with the palsy: —

DEAR SIR, — It has pleased God, this morning, to deprive me of the powers of speech; and as I do not know but that it may be his further good pleasure to deprive me soon of my senses, I request you will, on the receipt of this note, come to me, and act for me as the exigencies of my case may require.

I am, sincerely yours,

June 17, 1783. SAM. JOHNSON.

Nor, on the other, should we naturally fall to the level of the style of the letter given below, addressed in all seriousness and in official correspondence by the representative of an association of college alumni to the representative of the faculty and corporation of the institution from which they were graduated :—

DEAR SIR, — Enclosed find answer to yours of 3d. Have just signed lease for headquarters for ——, second floor of 1258 Michigan Avenue, corner of 13th Street. The Northwestern Alumni Association will endeavor to make life pleasant for the —— boys during the Fair. Shall send photograph of building and prospectus of arrangement later.

Yours respectfully, _____ _____.

The courteous medium between the two extremes any teacher who may chance to use this book can readily illustrate from his own correspondence.

3. The Personal Letter. — The indispensable qualities of the personal letter are of quite another order. Clearness, brevity, and courtesy are almost universal virtues ; but whatever the personal letter does or does not do, it must never disguise completely, or to any considerable extent, the individuality of the writer. For the letter to a friend is not an essay to the public at large, but purely and simply the record on paper of what would, if time or convenience permitted, be delivered by word of mouth. "The best letters," says Professor Norton, writing of the correspond-

ence of Lowell, "are truly not those written with literary intent. A letter with an address, however artfully concealed, to any other reader than the person to whom it is professedly written, may be excellent, may be durable as a piece of literature, may have every merit except that which gives to a letter its supreme pleasantness."

Nothing could be a better illustration of what has been said above than an extract from one of Lowell's own letters: —

ELMWOOD, Aug. 28, 1865.

"Why I did not come to Ashfield, as I hoped and expected, I will tell you when I see you. Like that poor doctor in the *Inferno*, I have seen before me as I sat in reverie those yellow hills with their dark green checkers of woods and the blue undulation of edging mountains (which we looked at together that lovely Sunday morning last year) I can't say how often. Perhaps I do not wish to see them again — and in one sense I do not, they are such a beautiful picture in my memory. For I have a theory — or rather it belongs to my temperament to believe — that there are certain things that one should take a sip at, as a bird does at a spring, and then fly away forever, taking with us a snatch of picture, the trees, the sky with its cloud-drifts of warm snow — yes, and our own image in the sliding wave too. We do not care to see our own footprints on the edge again, still less to tread in them. Somehow the geese always follow where the song-birds have been, and leave their slumpy stars in the mud themselves have made. There, by ginger! I meant to give the merest hint of a sentiment, and I have gone

splash into a moral! I did not mean it, but I cannot cure myself. I shall never be a poet till I get out of the pulpit, and New England was all meeting-house when I was growing up. But I assure you I am never dull but in spite of myself.

"Somehow, this cool, beautiful summer day, I feel my heart go out towards you all, and am not writing because I ought. I fancy you up there in your little withdrawing-chamber of a town, with a hundred miles of oak 'sported' against the world, and it makes me happy. And when one is happy, what a beautiful frame it sets the world in!"[1]

EXERCISE.

I. Write (1) a letter in which your object is to convey a simple piece of information to a stranger in the briefest, clearest, and most courteous fashion; (2) one in which your object is to explain to a correspondent a complicated situation of some sort or other; (3) one in which your object is to give an account, to an intimate friend, of your own life during the past few weeks or years.

II. Examine, under the direction of the instructor, selected letters from certain of the following authors: Cicero, St. Paul, Voltaire, Chesterfield, Thackeray, Lowell, and Carlyle. Test them in regard to their adequacy for the purpose for which they were intended.

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1893, p. 559.

CHAPTER II.

TRANSLATION.

1. The Two Kinds of Translation. — Of the value of translation as an exercise in composition, and the importance of so mastering both our own language and the other important languages that we can really transfer thought from one tongue to another with the least possible sacrifice of form or substance, it is not necessary to remind the student. Our duty is merely to offer such hints as young writers may find useful, in what are perhaps their first serious attempts at translation. We should first notice that the matter which we are called upon to translate may be of two kinds, — matter in which the thought, the information, there contained is alone of value ; and matter in which it is important to preserve the form as well as the thought.

2. Translation in which the Idea alone is Important. — The greater number of cases in which we are called upon to translate from a foreign language are of the kind first mentioned. An important book on physics, philosophy, or history, is just as likely to be written in German or French as it is in English ; but the thoughts or ideas contained in it can just as well be expressed in English as in German, if some one is only willing to give time and patience to mastering

them in the original, and to transferring them to his native idiom. In attempting to translate, then, a page of Wundt, or Janet, or Lombroso, or any of the historical or scientific writers of the day, we are not likely to have before us a task in which the method of procedure is difficult to grasp. The author chose to represent by a page or a chapter of German words a certain collection of facts and the development of a certain idea or ideas. All that we have to do is to make ourselves, through the medium of his language, masters of his facts and his idea, and then to reproduce them fully and exactly in English. Our duty concerns only two points : (1) that what we write is precisely what the author meant, without omission, addition, or change of fact, thought, idea, or association ; and (2) that what we write is good English. All else is of subordinate importance. If the author is a Frenchman, and used the peculiar French method of paragraph-structure, or German, and used the peculiar German method of sentence-structure, we are not in the least obliged to follow him in English. English paragraphs and English sentences are alone appropriate for us, nor should we hesitate to combine three tiny French paragraphs, or cut into three one enormous German sentence. It is the original substance that we want, not necessarily the original form.

3. Hints as to Procedure. — There are two ways and, strictly speaking, only two ways in which we can set

to work at a translation in which the reproduction of the form of the original is not involved. We can translate literally from our Latin original, for instance, and then try to make good English of our version, or we can render at once into good English, and then undertake whatever modifications are necessary in order to make the transferrence of thought complete. The first method leads almost invariably to disaster. How absurd the ordinary literal translation of the schoolboy is may be seen from the following selection from a paper written at a recent admission examination at Harvard College: —

"Thus they spoke praying and Pallas Athene heard them. And when they had prayed to the daughter of the mighty Zeus, then they started to leave, just as two lions who prowling through the dark night cause death and destruction, and their dark blood makes through their bodies. But Hector did not permit the leaders of the Trojans to sleep but called an assembly of all the noblest men, as many as there were leaders and counsel in the ranks of the Trojans, and having summoned them together he planned a skilful plan. And Hector said 'If there is any one who will promise to do this task to him I will give a mighty gift. For I will give him a great prize. For I will give to him a chariot and two horses with beautiful necks, and these horses are the best that there are near the swift ships of the Greeks. And the man will receive great glory, who will accomplish the task of approaching the swift sailing ships and find out whether the swift ships are guarded as they formerly were, or whether the enemy having been wounded by us, are planning flight

with one another and do not want to keep watch through the night, being overcome by terrible weariness: ' Thus Hector spoke and the leaders were all hushed in silence. And amongst the Trojans there was a certain Dolon, the son of Eumedes, a noble herald. This Dolon was rich in gold and silver, he was not very well built but he was a swift runner. And he was the only son of Eumedes but he had five sisters. And thus he addressed Hector and the Trojans: 'Oh Hector, My noble heart and mind urges me to approach near the swift sailing ships,' and scout about them." [1]

But the abomination of the patched-up literal translation is scarcely better than that of the bare literal translation, as may be seen from the following example, in which, in spite of the care taken here and there to preserve the English idiom intact, the whole tone is unmistakably foreign: —

"Frederick William, the great Elector of Brandenburg, found his possessions after the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia in a sad condition: scattered through all parts of Lower Germany, East Prussia under Polish supremacy, all under the control of an almost independent nobility, — this was the state of things which presented itself to his unbiassed eye and energetic will. He succeeded first in shaking off the Polish yoke; then he turned his newly-acquired authority against the privileges of the estates,

[1] *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, January, 1893, pp. 183–4. An ambitious version of the passage in question would, of course, attempt to reproduce the form as well as the thought of the original. It may, however, be fairly doubted whether in this case the translator had such a purpose in mind.

and got for himself the control of the military and the revenue in the Province. This took place also in Brandenburg, in Cleves, and in the county of Mark. His first and last object was to establish an ever-ready standing army; for centuries no power of any importance had cared for the protection of northern Germany, and he had learned that in the first place one must make life secure, and afterwards plan to improve its conditions. He succeeded so far as to drive out from Brandenburg and Prussia the Swedes, whose nation since the days of Gustavus Adolphus had grown to be one of the great powers; and he was able with an armed hand and a defiant brow, to confront even Louis XIV., at that time the disposer of the destinies of Europe. On the ground of these services, his son Frederick obtained, after great efforts, the royal crown of Prussia; and his successor, Frederick William I., became after him the founder of the first modern State in Germany. His was a nature in which the repulsive and the imposing, the uncouth and the admirable, were closely united. In his manners a rough and unrefined peasant, in his family a tyrant, in his government a despot, choleric almost to madness, his reign would have been a curse to the country, had he not united with his unlimited power a rare executive ability and an incorruptible fidelity to duty; and from first to last he consecrated all his powers to the common weal. By him effective limitations were put upon the independent action of the provinces, and upon the overgrown privileges of the estates."[1]

If we would avoid foreignness of tone or idiom in

[1] Von Sybel: *The Founding of the German Empire by William I.*, pp. 20–21.

translation, there is, therefore, but one way open to us. We must (1) master completely the thought of the original, then (2) set ourselves to writing it down in the English language and in the English way, and (3) then revise our version with a view to bringing it into exact conformity with the thought of the original. That the tinge of foreignness may be reduced to a minimum may be seen from the following passage from Mr. Saintsbury's translation of Scherer's essay on George Eliot: —

"It must be owned, too, that mere curiosity helped the success of these works; for it was soon seen that the name they bore was a pseudonym. It was asked what was the author's sex. Not a few of the authors in vogue had the honor of having attributed to them a book which certainly none of them was capable of writing. There were guesses and counter-guesses in the columns of the newspapers. One critic — a French critic, it is true — had just with elaborate induction proved that the author of *Adam Bede* must be a man, and what is more an English clergyman, when the veil was rent. The enchanter was an enchantress — Miss Evans by name. But there was something that doubled the mystery at the very moment when it seemed to vanish. Miss Evans was by no means utterly unknown in the literary world. She had worked on a very serious periodical, the *Westminster Review*. She had written theological articles in it. A translation of Strauss's celebrated work on the Life of Jesus was hers. What a mixture of contradictions and surprises! It was not enough to have to acknowledge a woman as the first novelist of England; more than that,

this woman combined faculties which had never been associated in the memory of man. She was at once a savant and a poet. There was in her the critic who analyzes and the artist who creates. Nay, the pen which had interpreted Strauss — the most pitiless adversary of Christian tradition that the world has produced — this very pen had just drawn the charming portrait of Dinah, and had put on the lips of this young Methodist girl the inspired discourse at Hayslope and the touching prayer in the prison."

4. Translation in which Form is as Important as Matter. — Much more difficult than the kind of translation we have been considering is that in which it is no less important to preserve the form in which the matter is presented than the matter itself, as in the case of the *Iliad*, for instance, which must obviously have an altogether different tone and quality in English blank verse from that which it has in Greek hexameter. For a work of art, whether in prose or verse, is more than a succession of words which express a series of facts and ideas. In the work of art, each word depends for its value on its power of connotation as well as its power of denotation.[1] Nor is that all. In a work of art words are arranged, not merely according to the order which clearness demands, but in an order which heightens the emotional power of the words themselves by the musical

[1] See Wendell's *English Composition*, Scribner & Sons, pp. 74–5; or, Carpenter's *Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition*, Advanced Course, pp. 191 and 206.

effects of rhythm, balance, quantity, accent, alliteration, or rhyme. In the greater number of cases it is impossible to translate a work of this kind with anything like adequacy. English and German, it is true, are languages sufficiently similar in forms and possibilities of style to render the transferrence of matter and manner in some instances (as in the celebrated German translation of Shakspere) strikingly successful. But such cases are the exception, not the rule. Though *Hamlet* be not unworthy reading in German, it is certainly very curious reading in French, as a comparison of the two passages printed below will prove:—

"O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on 't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month —

Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is woman! —
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears, — why she, even she —
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer — married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules."

Hamlet, Act I., Scene 2.

"Oh! pourquoi cette masse de terre trop endurcie ne peut-elle s'amollir par la douleur, se fondre et se résoudre en flots de larmes! ou pourquoi l'Eternel n'a-t-il pas armé sa foudre contre le meurtre de soi-même! O Dieu! ô Dieu! qu'elles me semblent fastidieuses, insipides et vaines, toutes les jouissances de ce monde! ô Dieu, que je le dédaigne, et qu'il me lasse! Ce n'est qu'un champ agreste et dégénéré en friche; il ne se couvre que de fruits amers et d'une nature grossière et sauvage. — Que les choses en soient venues là! à peine deux mois qu'il est mort! — Non, pas deux mois encore! Un roi si accompli, qui était auprès de celui-ci ce qu'est un Dieu près d'un satyre; si tendre pour ma mère, qu'il ne permettait pas même aux vents du ciel d'importuner son visage d'un souffle trop violent. Ciel et terre! faut-il que ma mémoire me reste! . . . Quoi! elle s'attachait à lui comme si sa passion se fût accrue par la possession, et cependant, dans l'espace d'un mois. . . . — Je ne veux pas y penser. — O fragilité, la femme et toi n'avez que le même nom! Un mois à peine! — avant même qu'elle eût usé la chaussure avec laquelle elle a suivi le corps de mon pauvre père, toute en larmes. Oui, elle, elle-même. O Ciel, la brute, privée d'idées et de raison, aurait poussé plus loin son

deuil. Mariée avec mon oncle, le frère de mon père; mais qui ne ressemble pas plus à mon père que moi à Hercule."

In translating poetry, that species of composition in which form plays the greatest part, we frequently find ourselves, therefore, in a dilemma. If our language does not contain the rhythmical or metrical form which the original makes use of, we can, at best, only adopt the English form that seems most nearly to reproduce its effect. Take, for instance, the passage from the *Odyssey* which is printed below. To render it into English hexameter, as Dart has done with a beautiful passage from the *Iliad*, in the version that follows, is manifestly inadequate translation, for it substitutes in English a clumsy accentual metre for what was in Greek a flexible quantitative metre. The three succeeding versions will show three different points of view, each of which has decided limitations. If we turn the passage from the *Odyssey* into prose, however rhythmical, we lose much of the musical charm of the original. Pope gave it the favorite metrical form of his day, and Worsley a form which, though archaic in its association, Spenser has rendered almost as familiar to us as the hexameter was to the Greeks. Each has sacrificed much; which least it must be left to each student's taste to determine.

(*a*). εὗρον δ' ἐν βήσσῃσι τετυγμένα δώματα Κίρκης
ξεστοῖσιν λάεσσι, περισκέπτῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ.

ἀμφὶ δέ μιν λύκοι ἦσαν ὀρέστεροι ἠδὲ λέοντες,
τοὺς αὐτὴ κατέθελξεν, ἐπεὶ κακὰ φάρμακ' ἔδωκεν.
οὐδ' οἵ γ' ὥρμήθησαν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἄρα τοί γε
οὐρῇσιν μακρῇσι περισσαίνοντες ἀνέσταν.
ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα κύνες δαίτηθεν ἰόντα
σαίνωσ'· αἰεὶ γάρ τε φέρει μειλίγματα θυμοῦ·
ὣς τοὺς ἀμφὶ λύκοι κρατερώνυχες ἠδὲ λέοντες
σαῖνον· τοὶ δ' ἔδδεισαν, ἐπεὶ ἴδον αἰνὰ πέλωρα.
ἔσταν δ' ἐν προθύροισι θεᾶς καλλιπλοκάμοιο,
Κίρκης δ' ἔνδον ἄκουον ἀειδούσης ὀπὶ καλῇ,
ἱστὸν ἐποιχομένης μέγαν ἄμβροτον, οἷα θεάων
λεπτά τε καὶ χαρίεντα καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἔργα πέλονται.

Odyssey, x., 210–221.

(*b*) "They, all flush'd with hope, near the corpse-piled ridges of battle,
Pass'd thro' the livelong night: — their watch-fires sprinkled the darkness.
As when the moon shines full in the sky; — and in glory, around her,
Glitter the stars of heaven; no breezes to ruffle the stillness; —
But, in the calm clear night, long ranges of hills, and of headlands,
Forests, and all, stand out; — and the pure bright æther above them
Deepens, as star glimmers out upon star; — and the shepherd rejoices:
Not less thick in the space 'mid the fleet and the stream of the Xanthus
Glimmer'd the watch-fire lights of the Trojans fronting the city.

There were a thousand bales burning bright on the plain — and from each bale
Flicker'd the light on the armor of combatants fifty around it.
Champing the pulse and barley, in long rows waited the chargers,
Tether'd beside their cars, and expected the Morn on her bright throne." [1]

DART: *The Iliad*, viii., 553–65.

(*c*) "In the forest glades they found the halls of Circe builded, of polished stone, in a place with wide prospect. And all around the palace mountain-bred wolves and lions were roaming, whom she herself had bewitched with evil drugs that she gave them. Yet the beasts did not set on my men, but lo, they ramped about them and fawned on them, wagging their long tails. And as when dogs fawn about their lord when he comes from the feast, for he always brings them the fragments that soothe their mood, even so the strong-clawed wolves and the lions fawned around them; but they were affrighted when they saw the strange and terrible creatures. So they stood at the outer gate of the fair-tressed goddess, and within they heard Circe singing in a sweet voice, as she fared to and fro before the great web imperishable, such as is the handiwork of goddesses, fine of woof and full of grace and splendour."

BUTCHER and LANG.

[1] Unfortunately there is, so far as I know, no published translation of the *Odyssey* into English hexameter. For purposes of comparison I have therefore inserted a fairly typical passage from a hexameter translation of the *Iliad*.

(*d*) "The palace in a woody vale they found,
High raised of stone; a shaded space around;
Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tamed) familiar to the dome.
With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet.
As from some feast a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive
(Such as the good man ever used to give),
Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near;
They gaze with wonder not unmix'd with fear.
Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
And heard a voice resounding through the wood:
Placed at her loom within, the goddess sung;
The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung.
O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
Immortal labour! worthy hand divine."

POPE.

(*e*) "So in the woods the house they found
Of Circe; stone, well-hewn, and on conspicuous ground.

Wolves of the mountain all around the way,
And lions, softened by the spells divine,
As each her philters had partaken, lay.
These cluster round the men's advancing line
Fawning like dogs, who, when their lord doth dine,
Wait till he issues from the banquet-hall,
And for the choice gifts which his hands assign
Fawn, for he ne'er forgets them — so these all
Fawn on our friends, whom much the unwonted sights appall.

Soon at her vestibule they pause, and hear
A voice of singing from a lovely place,
Where Circe weaves her great web year by year,
So shining, slender, and instinct with grace,
As weave the daughters of immortal race."

WORSLEY.

EXERCISE.

I. Translate the following passages: —

1. "Sed quoniam res humanae fragiles caducaeque sunt, semper aliqui anquirendi sunt quos diligamus et a quibus diligamur: caritate enim benevolentiaque sublata omnis est e vita sublata jucunditas. Mihi quidem Scipio, quamquam est subito ereptus, vivit tamen semperque vivet; virtutem enim amavi illius vivi quae exstincta non est. Nec mihi soli versatur ante oculos, qui illam semper in manibus habui, sed etiam posteris erit clara et insignis. Nemo unquam animo aut spe majora suscipiet qui sibi non illius memoriam atque imaginem proponendam putet. Equidem ex omnibus rebus quas mihi aut fortuna aut natura tribuit, nihil habeo quod cum amicitia Scipionis possim comparare. In hac mihi de re publica consensus, in hac rerum privatarum consilium, in eadem requies plena oblectationis fuit. Nunquam illum ne minima quidem re offendi quod quidem senserim; nihil audivi ex eo ipse quod nollem. Una domus erat, idem victus isque communis; neque militia solum sed etiam peregrinationes rusticationesque communes. Nam quid ego de studiis dicam cognoscendi semper aliquid atque discendi, in quibus remoti ab oculis populi omne otiosum tempus contrivimus? Quarum rerum recordatio et memoria si una

cum illo occidisset, desiderium conjunctissimi atque amantissimi viri ferre nullo modo possem. Sed nec illa extincta sunt alunturque potius et augentur cogitatione et memoria; et si illis plane orbatus essem, magnum tamen afferret mihi aetas ipsa solatium, diutius enim jam in hoc desiderio esse non possum: omnia autem brevia tolerabilia esse debent etiam si magna sunt. Haec habui de amicitia quae dicerem. Vos autem hortor ut ita virtutem locetis, sine qua amicitia esse non potest, ut ea excepta nihil amicitia praestabilius putetis."

CICERO: *De Amicitia*, Chap. XXVII.

2. "Integer vitae scelerisque purus
Non eget Mauris jaculis, neque arcu,
Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetra:
Sive per Syrtes iter aestuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quae loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes.
Namque me silva lupus in Sabina,
Dum meam canto Lalagen, et ultra
Terminum curis vagor expeditis,
Fugit inermem,
Quale portentum neque militaris
Daunias latis alit aesculetis,
Nec Jubae tellus generat, leonum
Arida nutrix.
Pone me, pigris ubi nulla campis
Arbor aestiva recreatur aura,
Quod latus mundi nebulae malusque
Juppiter urguet;

Pone sub curru nimium propinqui
Solis, in terra domibus negata:
Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem."

HORACE: *Odes*, Book I., Ode **22.**

3. "Tout d'un coup, les trompettes sonnèrent: A cheval! Et, presque aussitôt, une autre sonnerie éclata: Sabre à la main!

"Le colonel de chaque régiment avait déjà galopé, prenant sa place de bataille, à vingtcinq mètres en avant du front. Les capitaines étaient à leur poste, en tête de leurs hommes. Et l'attente recommença, dans un silence de mort. Plus un bruit, plus un souffle sous l'ardent soleil. Les cœurs seuls battaient. Un ordre encore, le dernier, et cette masse immobile allait s'ébranler, se ruer d'un train de tempête.

"Mais, à ce moment, sur la crête du coteau, un officier parut, à cheval, blessé, et que deux hommes soutenaient. On ne le reconnut pas d'abord. Puis, un grondement s'éleva, roula en une clameur furieuse. C'était le général Margueritte, dont une balle venait de traverser les joues, et qui devait en mourir. Il ne pouvait parler, il agita le bras, là-bas, vers l'ennemi.

"La clameur grandissait toujours.

"—— Notre général. . . . Vengeons-le, vengeons-le!

"Alors, le colonel du premier régiment, levant en l'air son sabre, cria d'une voix de tonnerre: —

"—— Chargez!

"Les trompettes sonnaient, la masse s'ébranla, d'abord au trot. Prosper se trouvait au premier rang, mais presque à l'extrémité de l'aile droite. Le grand danger

est au centre, où le tir de l'ennemi s'acharne d'instinct. Lorsqu'on fut sur la crête du calvaire et que l'on commença à descendre de l'autre côté, vers la vaste plaine, il aperçut très nettement, à un millier de mètres, les carrés prussiens sur lesquels on les jetait. D'ailleurs, il trottait comme dans un rêve, il avait une légèreté, un flottement d'être endormi, un vide extraordinaire de cervelle, qui le laissait sans une idée. C'était la machine qui allait, sous une impulsion irrésistible. On répétait : 'Sentez la botte ! sentez la botte ! ' pour serrer les rangs le plus possible et leur donner une résistance de granit. Puis, à mesure que le trot s'accélérait, se changeait en galop enragé, les chasseurs d'Afrique poussaient, à la mode arabe, des cris sauvages, qui affolaient leurs montures. Bientôt, ce fut une course diabolique, un train d'enfer, ce furieux galop, ces hurlements féroces, que le crépitement des balles accompagnait d'un bruit de grêle, en tapant sur tout le métal, les gamelles, les bidons, le cuivre des uniformes et des harnais. Dans cette grêle, passait l'ouragan de vent et de foudre dont le sol tremblait, laissant au soleil une odeur de laine brûlée et de fauves en sueur."

ZOLA: *La Débacle*, p. 319.

4. " Die Lebensgeschichte des Immanuel Kant ist schwer zu beschreiben. Denn er hatte weder Leben noch Geschichte. Er lebte ein mechanisch geordnetes, fast abstraktes Hagestolzenleben in einem stillen abgelegenen Gässchen zu Königsberg, einer alten Stadt an der nordöstlichen Grenze Deutschlands. Ich glaube nicht, dass die grosse Uhr der dortigen Kathedrale leidenschaftloser und regelmässiger ihr äusseres Tagewerk vollbrachte, wie ihr Landsmann Immanuel Kant. Aufstehn, Kaffe-

trinken, Schreiben, Kollegienlesen, Essen, Spazierengehn, Alles hatte seine bestimmte Zeit, und die Nachbaren wussten ganz genau, dass die Glocke halb vier sei, wenn Immanuel Kant in seinem grauen Leibrock, das spanische Röhrchen in der Hand, aus seiner Hausthüre trat, und nach der kleinen Lindenallee wandelte, die man seinetwegen noch jetzt den Philosophengang nennt. Achtmal spazierte er dort auf und ab, in jeder Jahreszeit, und wenn das Wetter trübe war oder die grauen Wolken einen Regen verkündigten, sah man seinen Diener, den alten Lampe, ängstlich besorgt hinter ihm drein wandeln mit einem langen Regenschirm unter dem Arm, wie ein Bild der Vorsehung.

"Sonderbarer Kontrast zwichen dem äusseren Leben des Mannes und seinen zerstörenden, weltzermalmenden Gedanken! Wahrlich, hätten die Bürger von Königsberg die ganze Bedeutung dieses Gedankens geahnt, sie würden vor jenem Manne eine weit grauenhaftere Scheu empfunden haben als vor einem Scharfrichter, der nur Menschen hinrichtet — aber die guten Leute sahen in ihm nichts Anderes als einen Professor der Philosophie, und wenn er zur bestimmten Stunde vorbeiwandelte, grüsster sie freundlich, und richteten etwa nach ihm ihre Taschenuhr."

HEINE, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland.*

5. "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht,
Kennst du es wohl?
Dahin! Dahin
Möcht' ich mit dir, O mein Geliebter, ziehn!

"Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach,
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an:
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, gethan?
Kennst du es wohl?
Dahin! Dahin
Möcht' ich mit dir, O mein Beschützer, ziehn!

"Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg?
Das Maulthier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg,
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut;
Es stürzt der Fels und über ihn die Fluth.
Kennst du ihn wohl?
Dahin! Dahin
Geht unser Weg! O Vater, lass uns ziehn!"

GOETHE.

II. Compare and contrast the divergent views on translation expressed in the passages given below. With which do you agree?

(*a*) "So many versions of the *Divine Comedy* exist in English that a new one might well seem needless. But most of these translations are in verse, and the intellectual temper of our time is impatient of a transmutation in which substance is sacrificed for form's sake, and the new form is itself different from the original. The conditions of verse in different languages vary so widely as to make any versified translation of a poem but an imperfect reproduction of the archetype. It is like an imperfect mirror that renders but a partial likeness, in which essential features are blurred or distorted. . . . Each language exhibits its own special genius in its poetic forms. Even

when they are closely similar in rhythmical method their poetic effect is essentially different, their individuality is distinct. The hexameter of the *Iliad* is not the hexameter of the *Æneid*. And if this be the case in respect to related forms, it is even more obvious in respect to forms peculiar to one language, like the *terza rima* of the Italian, for which it is impossible to find a satisfactory equivalent in another tongue.

"If, then, the attempt be vain to reproduce the form or to represent its effect in a translation, yet the substance of a poem may have such worth that it deserves to be known by readers who must read it in their own language or not at all. In this case the aim of the translator should be to render the substance fully, exactly, and with as close a correspondence to the tone and style of the original as is possible between prose and poetry. Of the charm, of the power of the poem, such a translation can give but an inadequate suggestion; the musical bond was of its essence, and the loss of the musical bond is the loss of the beauty to which form and substance mutually contributed, and in which they were both alike harmonized and sublimated. The rhythmic life of the original is its vital spirit, and the translation losing this vital spirit is at best as the dull plaster cast to the living marble or the breathing bronze. The intellectual substance is there; and if the work be good, something of the emotional quality may be conveyed; the imagination may mould the prose as it moulded the verse, — but, after all, 'translations are but as turn-coated things at best,' as Howell said in one of his *Familiar Letters*."

C. E. NORTON: Introduction to his translation of the *Divine Comedy*.

(*b*) "In a prose translation the task of representing the music of the original poem is not attempted, and the only problem is to give an exact equivalent for the matter and the language of the original. Translations of the *Commedia* of this kind have been published by Dr. Carlyle, by Mr. A. J. Butler, and Mr. C. E. Norton. In these, if an opinion may be offered, Dr. Carlyle's version may claim to be the more literal, because of its greater boldness in substituting for modes of expression natural to the Italian language their appropriate English equivalent. But prose translation, even at its best, leaves half the problem unattempted; the music, the cadences of the poem are lost. Blank verse, such as Cary and Longfellow have given, is little better. No attempt is made to satisfy the ear with any effect corresponding to that produced by Dante's recurring rimes; and in those parts of the poem where the matter is less elevated, and where the diction is simple, the absence of rime makes the translation tedious."

SHADWELL: Preface to his translation of the *Divine Comedy*.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION.

1. **The Uses of Description.** — The necessity for Description occurs, as a rule, under three kinds of circumstances: first and most commonly, in what may be called practical matters, when an engineer, for example, or an historian, finds it advisable to impart information in regard to the visible aspects of persons or objects; secondly, when novelists and poets perform a similar office in regard to the creations of their imaginations; thirdly, when in the course of daily communication we find it convenient to give an account of the impression made upon us by some person or object which we have seen. The second situation, that of the novelist, will probably rarely or never enter the personal experience of most of us, though of course any one of us is continually reading and judging imaginary descriptions made by other men; the first we may all of us at one time or another be placed in; the third is as common as can well be, and plays a large part in ordinary conversation.

2. **The Natural Method: the Photograph.** — The easiest way to reproduce upon another's mind the impression made upon your own by a scene, is to put before his eyes a picture of it. Obviously it is only by such

means that the one to whom you are addressing yourself can get impressions of at all the same kind as those which were made upon your retina. In a recent magazine, for instance, there was an article on renaissance gardens in Italy. The text was dull and technical, and in general failed to make any vivid impression on the mind. The accompanying illustrations, however, were such perfect representations of the gardens in question that after some study of them one could scarcely resist feeling that he had seen the gardens themselves. In the same way architects and engineers, in some cases, describe — and describe with accuracy and completeness — a house, a machine, or the country through which a railroad is to pass, by photographs, charts, plans, and diagrams. Even where representation of that sort is impossible or inconvenient, the writer who has to deal with an intricate subject will usually find it to his advantage, wherever it is possible, to insert diagrams or illustrations. The photograph, or pictorial illustration of any sort, is certainly superior to any combination of words as a medium of description, in that it can appeal to the eye as a whole and in an instant. It is inferior to the effects that language can produce, however, when we wish to call attention not to the object as a whole but to certain special aspects or characteristics of the object.

3. **The Inventory.** — When it is not possible to describe by means of a picture — and of course it is

usually not possible — the natural impulse is to produce what might be called an inventory, or, in other words, a detailed account, part by part, of the person or object to be described. The following, for example, is an "inventory" description of the common robin, *Turdus Americanus:* —

"Third and fourth quills about equal, fifth a little shorter, second longer than sixth; tail slightly rounded; above olive-gray, top and sides of the head black; chin and throat white, streaked with black; eyelids, and a spot above the eye anteriorly, white; under parts and inside of the wings chestnut-brown; the under tail coverts with tibiæ white, showing the plumbeous inner portions of the feathers; wings dark-brown, the feathers all edged more or less with pale-ash; tail still darker, the extreme feathers tipped with white; bill yellow, dusky along the ridge and at the tip.

"Length, nine and seventy-five one-hundredths inches; wing, five and forty-three one-hundredths; tail, four and seventy-five one-hundredths inches; tarsus, one and twenty-five one-hundredths.

"It is very seldom that specimens exhibit the colors exactly as described. Nearly always in winter, and in most cases at other times, the rufous feathers are margined with whitish, sometimes quite obscuring the color. The black feathers of the head, too, have brownish edgings. The white spot above the eye sometimes extends forwards towards the nostrils, but is usually quite restricted. The white patches on the two eyelids are separated from each other, anteriorly and posteriorly."

SAMUELS: *Birds of New England.*

Similar descriptions from botany, mineralogy, or kindred sciences are no doubt familiar to every one of us. Their purpose is sometimes merely that of identification. The writer is satisfied if his work is used only for reference, when, with the object itself perhaps at hand, the reader distinguishes it from other species of the same genus by means of the elaborate description there furnished. In many cases, however, — that, for instance, in which a historian, in order to pave the way for a subsequent narrative, undertakes to give a full account of the locality in which an important battle was fought, — the writer really wishes to make the reader as familiar with the persons or objects in question as if he had seen them himself. And here also description which follows the inventory method may be appropriate and successful.

4. **Description by Detail: the Beginning.** — In such cases a careful method is absolutely indispensable. We cannot begin anywhere and end anywhere. We must begin at a point where the reader's knowledge will touch ours. It will be profitable to notice, for example, in the following quotation from *Ivanhoe*, how Sir Walter Scott, in describing Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, is careful at the outset to present only his more obvious physical characteristics, reserving the more particular details of his dress and bearing until the reader is sufficiently familiar with the rough sketch, as it were, of the person whose picture the author desires to fix sharply in his memory: —

"The companion of the church dignitary was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall, and muscular; an athletic figure which long fatigue and constant exercise seemed to have left none of the softer part of the human form, having reduced the whole to brawn, bones, and sinews, which had sustained a thousand toils and were ready to dare a thousand more. His head was covered with a scarlet cap, faced with fur, — of that kind which the French call *mortier*, from its resemblance to the shape of an inverted mortar. His countenance was therefore fully displayed, and its expression was calculated to impress a degree of awe, if not of fear, upon strangers. High features, naturally strong and powerfully expressive, had been burnt almost into negro blackness by constant exposure to the tropical sun, and might, in their ordinary state, be said to slumber after the storm of passion had passed away; but the projection of the veins of the forehead, the readiness with which the upper lip and its thick black mustaches quivered upon the slightest emotion, plainly intimated that the tempest might be again and easily awakened. His keen, piercing, dark eyes told in every glance a history of difficulties subdued and dangers dared, and seemed to challenge opposition to his wishes for the pleasure of sweeping it from his road by a determined exertion of courage and of will; a deep scar on his brow gave additional sternness to his countenance and a sinister expression to one of his eyes, which had been slightly injured on the same occasion, and of which the vision, though perfect, was in a slight and partial degree distorted.

"The upper dress of this personage resembled that of his companion in shape, being a long monastic mantle;

but the colour being scarlet showed that he did not belong to any of the four regular orders of monks. On the right shoulder of the mantle there was cut, in white cloth, a cross of a peculiar form. This upper robe concealed what at first view seemed rather inconsistent with its form, a shirt, namely, of linked mail with sleeves and gloves of the same, curiously plaited and interwoven, as flexible to the body as those which are now wrought in the stocking-loom out of less obdurate materials. The forepart of his thighs, where the folds of his mantle permitted them to be seen, were also covered with linked mail; the knees and feet were defended by splints, or thin plates of steel, ingeniously jointed upon each other; and mail hose, reaching from the ankle to the knee, effectually protected the legs, and completed the rider's defensive armour. In his girdle he wore a long and double-edged dagger, which was the only offensive weapon about his person.

"He rode not a mule, like his companion, but a strong hackney for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutred for battle, with a chamfron or plaited headpiece upon his head, having a short spike projecting from the front. On one side of the saddle hung a short battle-axe, richly inlaid with Damascene carving; on the other the rider's plumed headpiece and hood of mail, with a long two-handed sword used by the chivalry of the period. A second squire held aloft his master's lance, from the extremity of which fluttered a small banderole or streamer, bearing a cross of the same form with that embroidered upon his cloak. He also carried his small triangular shield, broad enough at the top to protect the breast and from thence diminish-

ing to a point. It was covered with a scarlet cloth, which prevented the device from being seen."

A more prosaic example of the same principle, which the student will recognize as being founded on simple common-sense, is furnished by the opening paragraph of the commissioners' description of the Harvard Bridge across the Charles River:—

"The bridge is built across the Charles River, and connects West Chester Park in Boston with Front Street in Cambridge. The length of the bridge between centres of bearings on abutments is 2,164 feet 9 inches; the distance between harbor lines, measured at the centre line of the bridge, is 2,159 feet 4⅝ inches; the width of the bridge, excepting at and near the draw, is 69 feet 4 inches, measured between centres of railings; this width being divided into one roadway, 51 feet wide, and two sidewalks, each 9 feet 2 inches wide. The draw is 48 feet 4 inches wide between centres of railings, the width of roadway being 34 feet 6 inches, and the width of each sidewalk 6 feet 11 inches. The elevations of the roadway curb above Boston City base are 21 feet at abutments, and increase to 29.5 feet at piers 6 and 7, the bridge being level between these two piers."

5. Description by Detail: the Fundamental Image. — It is often important that the reader should be able from the first to group the numerous details of the whole description around one main image, giving each detail its place with relation to a simple fundamental figure. Notice, for instance, the way in which Victor

Hugo begins his description of the battle-field at Waterloo, and the familiar figures which Carlyle uses in his description of Silesia: —

(*a*) "Those who would get a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to lay down upon the ground in their mind a capital A. The left stroke of the A is the road from Nivelles; the right stroke is the road from Genappe; the cross of the A is the sunken road from Ohain to Braine l'Alleud. The top of the A is Mont Saint Jean; Wellington is there: the left-hand lower point is Hougomot; Reille is there, with Jerome Bonaparte: the right hand lower point is La Belle Alliance; Napoleon is there. A little below the point where the cross of the A meets and cuts the right stroke is La Haie Sainte. At the middle of this cross is the precise point where the final battle-word was spoken. There the lion is placed, the involuntary symbol of the supreme heroism of the Imperial Guard. The triangle contained at the top of the A, between the two strokes and the cross, is the plateau of Mont Saint Jean. The struggle for this plateau was the whole of the battle."

(*b*) "Schlesien, what we call Silesia, lies in elliptic shape, spread on the top of Europe, partly girt with mountains, like the crown or crest to that part of the earth — highest table-land of Germany or of the Cisalpine countries, and sending rivers into all the seas. . . . It leans sloping, as we hinted, to the east and to the north; a long curved buttress of mountains ('Riesengebirge,' Giant-Mountains, is their best-known name in foreign countries) holding it up on the south and west sides. This Giant-Mountain

range . . . shapes itself like a bill-hook (or elliptically, as was said): handle and hook together may be some two hundred miles in length. . . . A very pretty ellipsis, or irregular oval, on the summit of the European Continent, 'like the palm of a left hand well stretched out, with the Riesengebirge for thumb!' said a certain Herr to me, stretching out his arm in that fashion toward the north-west — palm well stretched out, measuring two hundred and fifty miles, and the crossway one hundred."[1]

6. Plan: Arrangement and Classification. — Not less necessary for making clear the details of an elaborate description than the devices we have suggested in the last two sections is an orderly and logical arrangement of the subject-matter. Notice, for example, how, in the following description of the Rhines vote-recording machine, the details are divided according to their character into two main groups, and arranged in the simple and logical order which the uses of the machine at once suggest: —

"The practical machine is an oblong brass box, about 10 x 14 inches, six inches deep, with a hinged cover. This box is placed on a small stand in the rear of the polling-room, and in plain sight of the judges and clerks of election. The voter is identified by the judges, and passes into the stall where the machine is. On raising the lid of the box, a screen is drawn up before the stall, shutting both voter and machine from view. The lid when raised discloses a number of keys not unlike organ stops. There are as

[1] Both (*a*) and (*b*) are quoted from Genung's *Practical Rhetoric*.

many rows of keys as there are tickets in the field, and as many keys in a row as there are offices to be filled. The printed name of each candidate and the office to which he aspires are placed in the top of these keys.

"The elector in voting presses down the key bearing the name of the candidate he wishes to support. The key remains down. In being depressed it has locked all the keys of other candidates to the same office, thus making it impossible for an elector to vote for more than one candidate to the same office; at the same time this key has imprinted indelibly, on a slip of paper beneath, a number — which is the total vote cast for that candidate at that time. The elector votes for each of the other offices in turn, in the same way, shuts down the lid of the box, thus ringing an alarm bell and dropping the screen in front, exposing machine and voter to the view of the judges. The box lid on being closed liberates all the keys, and the machine is ready for the next voter."

The Nation, April 18, 1889, pp. 326.

7. **The Defect of the Method of Details.** — The great defect of the method of describing by a vast number of details is one which is inherent in the nature of language. Language is always in motion, one word following another in time, and not standing contiguous to another in space as lines and colors do in a picture. Language, therefore, naturally the medium of narration, finds difficulty in representing objects at rest. To make this difficulty plain, we have only to consider the two machines which we actually use, one to record language, the other to represent bodies at rest, — the phonograph and the camera. When

we talk into the phonograph, it is necessary to keep the cylinder constantly in motion. When we let a scene paint itself on the sensitive surface of a plate, it is indispensable that the camera be perfectly still. Now, if we should try to take a picture with a phonograph, we should be to a certain degree in the position of a man trying to describe an object at rest by language, which is constantly in motion. Adequately to represent an object at rest by words, which must be always in motion, is impossible, for the method of taking the object bit by bit will, in the greater number of cases, leave a confused impression on the mind of the reader, who will almost infallibly forget at the twentieth detail what the fifth and the tenth were. Examine, for example, the following passage, in which a certain Constantinus Manasses undertook, by giving a pen-picture of Helen's charms, to eke out what he thought Homer's niggardliness of description : —

"She was a woman right beautiful, with fine eyebrows, of clearest complexion, beautiful cheeks; comely, with large full eyes, with snow-white skin, quick-glancing, graceful; a grove filled with graces, fair-armed, voluptuous, breathing beauty undisguised. The complexion fair, the cheek rosy, the countenance pleasing, the eye blooming, a beauty unartificial, untinted, of its natural color, adding brightness to the brightest cherry, as if one should dye ivory with resplendent purple. Her neck long, of dazzling whiteness; whence she was called the swan-born, beautiful Helen."

Who can so piece and patch together this mass of details as to form in his mind a distinct image of Helen's beauty? Far better, in many cases, than a large list of details, even if they be well classified and arranged, is a carefully selected group of aspects or characteristics. The principle of selection, which we are now to consider, is really the same great principle of method in composition which we touched on in the Introduction. To select from all that we might say of the object, just what our specific idea of the object allows, what our specific purpose requires, and what our specific audience can understand and appreciate, is a much surer way to impress a distinct image on the reader's mind than that of the mere inventory.

8. **The Principle of Selection.** — We must make up our minds, then, what are the salient points of an object, and give those alone. Granted the main features of the object described, the reader can build up a conception of the whole object for himself. Here, for example, is a bit of description from *Felix Holt:* —

"She [the heroine] had time to remark that he [the hero] was a peculiar-looking person, but not insignificant, which was the quality that most hopelessly consigned a man to perdition. He was massively built. The striking points in his face were large, clear, gray eyes and full lips."

This description, as George Eliot herself says,

merely presents some "striking points" of the object described; it selects these points because they are striking. A more nice selection may choose only such points of an object as will bring out its general character. Tennyson, for instance, in his poem called *Mariana*, selects only such details of the scene as will bring up in the reader's mind the general sense of Mariana's great loneliness. Mariana is alone in her "moated grange," waiting for her lover, who will never come back to her. The grange is itself ruinous, deserted.

"With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange."

At night Mariana lies sleepless, lonely, seeking company even in the poplar-tree outside her window.

"And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'"

In the long days her loneliness makes every tiny sound jar upor her, or seem like voices of old friends.

"All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

"The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said;
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!'"

All the details in *Mariana* are thus selected simply to bring out Mariana's loneliness. We may forget the details, but only after they have done their work, produced precisely the effect which Tennyson desired.[1]

Description by selection may go farther still. Instead of presenting several important traits, or a single important trait, of an object, many writers try to sum up an entire object in one grand characteristic trait. Dickens is particularly fond of this method. Notice, for example, the following passage from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, introducing the "shabby-genteel" Mr. Tigg:—

"The gentleman was of that order of appearance which is currently termed shabby-genteel, though in respect of his dress he can hardly be said to have been in any extremities, as his fingers were a long way out of his gloves, and the soles of his feet were at an inconvenient distance from the upper leather of his boots. His nether garments were of a bluish grey — violent in its colours once, but sobered now by age and dinginess — and were so stretched and strained in a tough conflict between his braces and his straps, that they appeared every moment in danger of flying asunder at the knees. His coat, in colour blue and of a military cut, was buttoned and frogged up to his chin. His cravat was, in hue and pattern, like one of those mantles which hairdressers are

[1] For a long and elaborate description of the same kind, read Edgar Allan Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*. It is a long insistence on the mood of terror.

accustomed to wrap about their clients, during the progress of the professional mysteries. His hat had arrived at such a pass that it would have been hard to determine whether it was originally white or black. But he wore a moustache — a shaggy moustache too: nothing in the meek and merciful way, but quite in the fierce and scornful style — the regular Satanic sort of thing; and he wore, besides, a vast quantity of unbrushed hair. He was very dirty and very jaunty; very bold and very mean; very swaggering and very slinking; very much like a man who might have been something better, and unspeakably like a man who deserved to be something worse."

9. Description by Exaggeration of a Single Trait. — Carried to an extreme, — that is, to the exaggeration of a single trait or characteristic, — the method of selection thus becomes the chief instrument of satire and caricature, or of descriptions like those which Poe made use of to produce his peculiarly striking effects of horror. His nightmare story, *King Pest*, will illustrate the point in question. The scene is laid in England, in 1349, the year of the Black Plague, when fifty thousand persons are said to have died in London alone. Two seamen, somewhat drunk, stumble upon a merrymaking of the spirits of the plague. The portraits of two of these hobgoblins Poe paints as follows: —

"Fronting the entrance, and elevated a little above his companions, sat a personage who appeared to be the president of the table. His stature was gaunt and tall,

and Legs was confounded to behold in him a figure more emaciated than himself. His face was as yellow as saffron — but no feature, excepting one alone, was sufficiently marked to merit a particular description. This one consisted in a forehead so unusually and hideously lofty as to have the appearance of a bonnet or crown of flesh superadded upon the natural head. His mouth was puckered and dimpled into an expression of ghastly affability, and his eyes, as indeed the eyes of all at table, were glazed over with the fumes of intoxication. This gentleman was clothed from head to foot in a richly embroidered black silk-velvet pall, wrapped negligently around his form after the fashion of a Spanish cloak. His head was stuck full of sable hearse-plumes, which he nodded to and fro with a jaunty and knowing air; and in his right hand he held a huge human thigh-bone, with which he appeared to have been just knocking down some member of the company for a song.

"Opposite him, and with her back to the door, was a lady of no whit the less extraordinary character. Although quite as tall as the person just described, she had no right to complain of his unnatural emaciation. She was evidently in the last stage of a dropsy; and her figure resembled nearly that of the huge puncheon of October beer which stood, with its head driven in, close by her side, in a corner of the chamber. Her face was exceedingly round, red, and full; and the same peculiarity, or rather want of peculiarity, attached itself to her countenance which is before mentioned in the case of the president — that is to say, only one feature of her face was sufficiently distinguished to need a separate characterization: indeed, the acute Tarpaulin immediately observed that the

same remark might have applied to each individual person of the party, every one of whom seemed to possess a monopoly of some particular portion of physiognomy. With the lady in question this portion proved to be the mouth. Commencing at the right ear, it swept with a terrific chasm to the left, the short pendants which she wore in either auricle continually bobbing into the aperture. She made, however, every exertion to keep her mouth closed and look dignified, in a dress consisting of a newly starched and ironed shroud coming up close under her chin, with a crimpled ruffle of cambric muslin."

10. Description by a Single Trait: the Epithet. — The method of description by the selection of a single trait need not necessarily have the effect of satire or caricature, or even a grotesque effect. Nathaniel Hawthorne describes with vividness when he speaks of the "black, moody brow of Septimius Felton." Homer frequently reduces description to a single epithet, — to the constant epithet. "The well-greaved Achaians," "far-darting Apollo," "swift-footed Achilles," "wide-ruling Agamemnon," "white-armed Hera," "ægis-bearing Zeus," "bright-eyed Athene," "crafty Ulysses," — all these are but examples of description by exhaustive selection. Here, however, we reach a point where we accomplish our purpose of calling up a picture of a person or object in the reader's mind, no longer by a host of details, but by a single detail, that is, by suggestion rather than by simple assertion. We must now consider in detail the method of describing by suggestion.

11. The Principle of Suggestion. — So far we have been considering the practical side of the art of description; that is, how by stating a certain number of traits or characteristics in regard to an object we can impress upon the reader's understanding something like a complete notion of it. Another solution of the problem of how best to describe is more a matter of art, for it appeals to the imagination rather than to the understanding. It tries to call up a picture before us; it tries to suggest to us the nature of an object which, it may be, we have neither seen nor shall see; tries to make glow in our imaginations "the light that never was on sea and land;" tries, in fine, not merely to give the dead facts in regard to a person or object, but to produce the illusion of seeing it; not merely to identify it, but to interpret it.

For this purpose language is not without resources. The practical disadvantage of verbal description, as we have seen, lies in its inability to present its results at a glance of the eye, and the necessity of subjecting them, on account of the very nature of language, to a process of co-ordination on the part of the understanding which is decidedly wasteful of the attention. Its practical advantage, on the other hand, lies in its power to select from the details pertaining to the whole object, special traits, — a privilege which painting scarcely possesses. The great artistic value of the method of suggestion, on the other hand, lies in its power to express the mobile, changeable quality of

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persons or objects, which we call charm or ugliness. Language, being itself in motion, has an inherent capacity for building up pictures in the imagination by successive suggestions. By virtue of the power of connotation which words possess,[1] language can often suggest in an instant a picture which it could produce by explicit description only at great expense of time and means.

12. Methods of Suggestion. — To suggest charm or hatefulness, we habitually make use, as a rule, of one of three devices: (1) we say that the object is like something else, or (2) we tell what we feel when we see the object we wish to describe, or (3) we tell what actual actions of the person or object make it charming or hateful. Notice, for instance, how these methods are employed in the following passages: —

(*a*) "Now the woful notes begin to make themselves heard; now am I come where much lamentation smites me. I had come into a place mute of all light, that bellows as the sea does in a tempest, if it is combated by opposing winds. The infernal hurricane that never rests carries along the spirits in its rapine; whirling and smiting it molests them. When they arrive before its rushing blast, here are shrieks, and bewailing, and lamenting; here they blaspheme the power divine. I understood that unto such torment are condemned the carnal sinners who subject reason unto lust. And as their wings bear along the starlings in the cold season in a troop large and full, so that blast the evil spirits; hither, thither, down,

[1] See above, page 18, note 1.

up it carries them; no hope ever comforts them, not of repose, but even of less pain.

"And as the cranes go singing their lays, making in air a long line of themselves, so saw I come, uttering wails, shades borne along by the aforesaid strife. Wherefore I said, 'Master, who are those folk whom the black air so castigates?' . . . 'Helen thou seest, for whom so long a time of ill revolved; and thou seest the great Achilles, who at the end fought with love. Thou seest Paris, Tristan, —' and more than a thousand shades he showed me with his finger, and named them, whom love had parted from our life.

"After I had heard my Teacher name the dames of eld and the cavaliers, pity overcame me, and I was well nigh bewildered. I began, 'Poet, willingly would I speak with those two that go together, and seem to be so light upon the wind.' And he to me, 'Thou shalt see when they shall be nearer to us, and do thou then pray them by that love which leads them, and they will come.' Soon as the wind sways them toward us I lifted my voice, 'O weary souls, come speak to us, unless Someone forbids it.'

"As doves, called by desire, with wings open and steady, fly through the air to their sweet nest, borne by their will, these issued from the troop where Dido is, coming to us through the malign air, so strong was the compassionate cry."

NORTON: *Hell*, canto v.

(*b*) "But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,

Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them ; —
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity :
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days."

King Richard III., Act I., Scene 1.

13. The Pathetic Fallacy and Its Abuse. — The method of suggestion is apt to lead the imaginative person into a manner of expression or a state of mind that attributes to inanimate objects the actions or qualities of human creatures. In some cases such a manner of expression is appropriate and effective ; in others it is weak and misleading. Ruskin has styled the natural and appropriate use of these anthropomorphic figures of speech the Pathetic Fallacy, for a reason which the derivation of the word "pathetic" makes evident. Ruskin's statement, which has become famous, of the principle on which he believes the effective use of the pathetic fallacy is based, we shall give in his own words : —

"Of the cheating of the fancy we shall have to speak presently ; but, in this chapter, I want to examine the

nature of the other error, that which the mind admits, when affected strongly by emotion. Thus, for instance, in *Alton Locke*: —

> 'They rowed her in across the rolling foam —
> The cruel, crawling foam.'

The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'Pathetic Fallacy.'

"Now we are in the habit of considering this fallacy as eminently a character of poetical description, and the temper of mind in which we allow it, as one eminently poetical, because passionate. But, I believe, if we look well into the matter, we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness, — that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it.

"Thus, when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron 'as dead leaves flutter from a bough,' he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves: he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

> 'The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,'

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so far false, idea about the leaf: he fancies a life in it, and will, which there are

not; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. Here, however, there is some beauty, even in the morbid passage; but take an instance in Homer and Pope. Without the knowledge of Ulysses, Elpenor, his youngest follower, has fallen from an upper chamber in the Circean palace, and has been left dead, unmissed by his leader, or companions, in the haste of their departure. They cross the sea to the Cimmerian land; and Ulysses summons the shades from Tartarus. The first which appears is that of the lost Elpenor. Ulysses, amazed, and in exactly the spirit of bitter and terrified lightness which is seen in Hamlet, addresses the spirit with the simple, startled words: —

'Elpenor! How camest thou under the Shadowy darkness?
Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship?'

Which Pope renders thus: —

'O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?'

I sincerely hope the reader finds no pleasure here, either in the nimbleness of the sail, or the laziness of the wind! And yet how is it that these conceits are so painful now, when they have been pleasant to us in the other instances?

"For a very simple reason. They are not a *pathetic* fallacy at all, for they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion — a passion which never could possibly have spoken them — agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the last thing his mind

could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in any wise what was *not* a fact. The delay in the first three lines, and conceit in the last, jar upon us instantly, like the most frightful discord in music. No poet of true imagination could possibly have written the passage.

"Therefore, we see that the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy. Coleridge's fallacy has no discord in it, but Pope has set our teeth on edge. Without further questioning, I will endeavor to state the main bearings of this matter.

"The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, as I said above, that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has induced it. For it is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.

"So, then, we have the three ranks: the man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it; then, secondly, the man who perceives

wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose: a star, a sun, or a fairy's shield, or a forsaken maiden. And, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is forever nothing else than itself — a little flower, apprehended in the very plain and leafy fact of it, whatever and how many soever the associations and passions may be, that crowd around it. And, in general, these three classes may be rated in comparative order, as the men who are not poets at all, and the poets of the second order, and the poets of the first; only, however great a man may be, there are always some subjects which *ought* to throw him off his balance; some, by which his poor human capacity of thought should be conquered, and brought into the inaccurate and vague state of perception, so that the language of the highest inspiration becomes broken, obscure, and wild in metaphor, resembling that of the weaker man, overborne by weaker things."

Modern Painters, vol. iii.

14. Description by Means of Narration. — A second artistic solution of the problem of description is to suggest the nature of an object by telling a story about it. The handling of this method, however, obviously pertains to the subject of narration, which we shall consider in the next chapter. Identical in principle is the useful device by which motion is introduced into description. A typical instance would be one in which a battlefield is described by an observer who walks from one part of the scene to another, narrating what he sees in whatever sequence is most convenient for the grouping of the indispensable details.

EXERCISE.

1. Examine the following descriptions, analyzing the means employed in each: —

1. "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant forever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? Shall thy companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks

of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the harbergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride."

Job, chapter xli.

2. "But on my ears there smote a wailing, whereat forward intent I open wide my eye. And the good master said, 'Now, son, the city draws near that is named Dis, with its heavy citizens, with its great throng.' And I, 'Master, already in the valley therewithin I clearly discern its mosques, vermilion, as if issuing from fire.' And he said to me, 'The eternal fire that blazes within them displays them red as thou seest in this low Hell.'"

NORTON: *Hell*, canto viii.

3. "And I, 'Good Leader, let us go on with greater speed, for now I am not weary as before; and behold now how the hill casts his shadow.' 'We will go forward with this day,' he answered, 'as much further as we shall yet be able; but the fact is of other form than thou supposest. Before thou art there — above thou wilt see him return, who is now hidden by the hill-side so that thou dost not make his rays to break. But see there a soul which seated all alone is looking toward us; it will point out to us the speediest way.' We came to it. O Lombard soul, how lofty and scornful wast thou; and in the movement of thine eyes grave and slow! It said not anything to us, but let us go on, looking only in manner of a lion when he couches. Virgil, however, drew near to it, praying that it would show to us the best ascent; and it answered not to his request, but of our country and life it asked us. And the sweet Leader began, 'Mantua,' — and the shade, all in itself recluse, rose toward him from the place where erst it was, saying, 'O Mantuan, I am Sordello of thy city,' — and they embraced each other."

NORTON: *Purgatory*, canto vi.

4. *Edgar.* "Come on, sir; here's the place. Stand still. How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy

Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Gloster. "Set me where you stand.

Edgar. "Give me your hand. You are now within a foot
Of the extreme verge. For all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright." *King Lear*, Act IV., Scene 6.

II. 1. Compare with the Laocoön, familiar to you from photographs or from memory, the following description of the same scene by Virgil: —

"Hic aliud majus miseris multoque tremendum
Objicitur magis, atque improvida pectora turbat.
Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
Solemnes taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.
Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta —
Horresco referens — immensis orbibus angues
Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;
Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta jubaeque
Sanguineae superant undas; pars cetera pontum
Pone legit sinuatque immensa volumine terga;
Fit sonitus spumante salo. Jamque arva tenebant,
Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni,
Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.
Diffugimus visu exsangues. Illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus;

Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,
Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus; et jam
Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superantque capite et cervicibus altis.
Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,
Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit:
Quales mugitus, fugit quum saucius aram
Taurus et incertam excussit cervice securim."

Æneid, II., 199–224.

2. What device for producing the illusion that good description demands is employed in Homer's famous description of the shield of Achilles?

3. What is the value as description of the following passage?

"Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die."

III. 1. Describe the same person or object by the two opposed methods, — description by detail and description by suggestion.

2. Describe an object, person, or scene in which you find it necessary to use a diagram or sketch in order to supplement the verbal description.

CHAPTER IV.

NARRATION.

I. The Fitness of Language for Narration. — Narrative is the special field of language; for language, being itself a series of words uttered in succession, is peculiarly adapted for representing sequence of events in time.[1] A single picture can never adequately represent a series of events; that is, it can never tell us a story: at best it can only suggest one. Narrative deals with what happens, and obviously nothing can really happen in a picture or a statue. Take, for instance, that succession of facts which we call music. Artists may portray with success the face or the figure of a person singing, but it would be impossible adequately to represent, or indeed even to suggest, the song itself. That language, however, may succeed where painting and sculpture must fail, is evident from the following instances: —

(*a*) "It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook

[1] The facility with which language can, as it were, keep pace with the motion of outward events is suggested by Pope's well-known lines: —

"When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main."

In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner.*

(*b*) "Hail to thee, blithe spirit —
Bird thou never wert —
That from heaven or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

SHELLEY: *To a Skylark.*

(*c*) "The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together."

ROSSETTI: *The Blessed Damozel.*

2. **The Extent of the Material for Narrative.** — Not only is narration a form of composition for which language is well adapted, but the proper subject-matter for narrative — acts and events — is the very stuff of which our lives are made. Our first question is therefore likely to be, not how shall we find events to put into our narrative, but where shall we set the limit for them: how many shall we admit? It might, at first sight, seem, for instance, that it would be simple enough to record the experience of a single moment in the life of one man. A striking passage in Tolstoï's *War and Peace* shows, however, what a multitude of minor events he saw fit to include in the

experiences of a man who was almost instantaneously killed by a bursting bomb. With what takes place in just *one* minute he fills three pages. But the story which Tolstoï is telling covers three months in one hundred and forty pages. If, then, he had told the whole story with the same fulness, the record of the three months would fill just three hundred and eighty-eight thousand, eight hundred pages; and allowing fifty years for a man's life, this way of treating it would fill seventy-seven million, seven hundred and sixty thousand pages. Moreover, the life of the most ordinary man does not stand off by itself like a statue; it is shaped and moulded by other lives; it shapes and moulds other lives. Unless we take into consideration those other lives, that life we tell of is hardly intelligible. For the purposes of an epigram the life of a king may be told in a quatrain. The Earl of Rochester proposed this for King Charles II.: —

> "Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King,
> Whose word no man relies on,
> Who never said a foolish thing
> Nor ever did a wise one."

On the other hand, Thomas Carlyle considered three thousand pages scant provision for the biography of Frederick the Great. How impressive, however, that biography is the following comment will show: —

"The most notable example of unity thus demonstrable that I have lately come across is a book so long that

until last summer I never had the courage to read it. I mean Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* — a work which comprises a considerable number of volumes and twenty-one distinct books, each of which is subdivided into a number of chapters, of which most are in turn subdivided into separately named sections. The edition I read in the spare hours of six or eight weeks, was printed rather closely on a page containing, I should guess, from three to four hundred words. The number of these pages was in the region of three thousand; and the matters discussed therein embraced the whole recorded history of Brandenburg and of the House of Hohenzollern, and pretty much everything that happened in Europe during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. Sovereigns from Henry the Fowler to Catherine the Second crowded on us pell-mell, — soldiers, statesmen, buffoons, peasants; Voltaire, and Maria Theresa, and Augustus of Saxony, and all four Georges of England, and two or three Louises of France; tobacco parliaments, Silesian wars, Potsdam millers, scandals, heroisms, schoolmasters, apothecaries, what not that whirled about in this world of ours a century or two ago. Such a mass of living facts — for somehow Carlyle never lets a fact lack life — I had never seen flung together before; and yet the one chief impression I brought away from the book was that to a degree rare even in very small ones it possessed as a whole the great trait of unity. In one's memory, each fact by and by fell into its own place: the chief ones stood out; the lesser sank back into a confused but not inextricable mass of throbbing vitality. And from it all emerged more and more clearly the one central figure who gave his name to the whole, — Frederick of Prussia.

It was as they bore on him from all quarters of time and space, and as he reacted on them far and wide, that all these events and all these people were brought back out of their dusty graves to live again. Whatever else Carlyle was, the unity of this enormous book proves him, when he chose to be, a Titanic artist."

WENDELL: *English Composition*, pp. 157–158.

If such is the scope of the record of a single historical figure, consider the immensity of the task and the daring of the man who, like Sir Walter Raleigh, should undertake to write a *History of the World.*

3. An Objective Point Necessary. — Whether one is called upon to write a history of the world or of a summer vacation, there arises in one's memory a great and confused mass of facts, events, and comments, all competing for admission to the narrative. We are already started on the second epoch of our World or the second week of our Vacation, when dozens of memories of the first epoch or of the first week suddenly appear. We had forgotten them before ; it is too much trouble to write the first part all over again, and we decide to insert them anywhere. We thus produce confusion worse confounded. Undisciplined story-tellers almost always fall into this error. They double and turn on their own trails like frightened hares. Here, for instance, is a scrap from the conversation of a somewhat exaggerated, yet not quite impossible, young woman presented to us by Charles Dickens : —

"'One remark,' said Flora, giving their conversation, without the slightest notice and to the great terror of Clennam, the tone of a love-quarrel, 'I wish to make, one explanation I wish to offer, when your Mama came and made a scene of it with my Papa, and when I was called down into the little breakfast room where they were looking at one another with your Mama's parasol between them, seated on two chairs like mad bulls what was I to do!'

"'My dear Mrs. Finching,' urged Clennam — 'all so long ago and so long concluded, is it worth while seriously to —'

"'I can't, Arthur,' returned Flora, 'be denounced as heartless by the whole society of China without setting myself right when I have the opportunity of doing so, and you must be very well aware that there was Paul and Virginia which had to be returned and which was returned without note or comment, not that I mean to say you could have written to me watched as I was, but if it had only come back with a red wafer on the cover I should have known that it meant Come to Pekin Nankeen and What's the third place, barefoot.'

"'My dear Mrs. Finching, you were not to blame, and I never blamed you. We were both too young, too dependent and helpless, to do anything but accept our separation. — Pray think how long ago,' gently remonstrated Arthur.

"'One more remark,' proceeded Flora with unslackened volubility, 'I wish to make, one more explanation I wish to offer, for five days I had a cold in the head from crying which I passed entirely in the back drawing-room still on the first floor and still at the back of the house to confirm my words — when that dreary period had passed a lull succeeded years rolled on and Mr. F. became acquainted

with us at a mutual friend's he was all attention he called next day, he soon began to call three evenings a week and to send in little things for supper, it was not love on Mr. F.'s part it was adoration, Mr. F. proposed with the full approval of Papa and what could I do?' "

Little Dorrit, book i., chap. xiii.

This is the way uncultivated people sometimes talk and write when they undertake to tell a story. The general trouble is that they have no conception of what method means. They get nowhere because they aim nowhere. For, after all, the simplest and best receipt for narrating anything is, first, find out what you are to say; second, say it; and third, waste no time in getting started.

4. The Two Great Classes of Subject-Matter in Narration and the Means Appropriate to Each. — Our main difficulty, then, in trying to present in orderly fashion some of the interesting happenings experienced by us in this intricate life of ours, is that we find ourselves in imminent danger either of confusion, or of tediousness, or of both confusion and tediousness. How shall we avoid these dangers? As in Description, there are two solutions of the difficulty, — a practical solution and an artistic solution. The practical solution aims merely at accuracy of fact; it works by simple selection from the records of experience. We may call it, broadly, History. The artistic solution aims to make dead facts take on flesh and blood, and live for us; it works by suggestion. We may call it, roughly, Romance.

History is the record of those happenings which we agree to call real; Romance, of those happenings which we agree to pretend are real, though all the while we know they are not real. Surely, one would say, there are enough real things in the world; what is the use of dressing up lies and making believe they are real things? Why not stick to fact, make fact interesting, and give up fiction altogether? These questions are not unreasonable; indeed, no less a man than Thomas Carlyle was largely of the opinion that we should do well to give over fiction entirely, stick to fact, and make fact interesting. Carlyle's plea for fact is at least worth our attention: —

"Here, too, may we not pause for an instant, and make a practical reflection? Considering the multitude of mortals that handle the Pen in these days, and can mostly spell, and write without glaring violations of grammar, the question naturally arises: How is it, then, that no Work proceeds from them, bearing any stamp of authenticity and permanence; of worth for more than one day? Shiploads of Fashionable Novels, Sentimental Rhymes, Tragedies, Farces, Diaries of Travel, Tales by flood and field, are swallowed monthly into the bottomless Pool: still does the Press toil; innumerable Paper-makers, Compositors, Printers' Devils, Bookbinders, and Hawkers grown hoarse with loud proclaiming rest not from their labour; and still, in torrents, rushes on the great array of Publications, unpausing, to their final home; and still Oblivion, like the Grave, cries, Give! give! How is it that of all these countless multitudes no one can attain to the smallest

mark of excellence, or produce aught that shall endure longer than 'snow-flake on the river,' or the foam of penny-beer? We answer: Because they *are* foam; because there is no *Reality* in them. These Three Thousand men, women, and children, that make up the army of British Authors, do not, if we will well consider it, *see* anything whatever; consequently *have* nothing that they can record and utter, only more or fewer things that they can plausibly pretend to record. The Universe, of Man and Nature, is still quite shut up from them; the 'open secret' still utterly a secret, because no sympathy with Man or Nature, no love and free simplicity of heart has yet unfolded the same. Nothing but a pitiful Image of their own pitiful Self, with its vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds, hangs forever painted in the retina of these unfortunate persons; so that the starry *All*, with whatsoever it embraces, does but appear as some expanded magic-lantern shadow of that same Image, — and naturally looks pitiful enough."

CARLYLE: *Biography*.

So much of literature is futile, says Carlyle in effect, because there is no reality in it; and there is no reality in it because "forever painted in the retina of these unfortunate" authors hangs "nothing but a pitiful Image of their own pitiful Self, with its vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds." Carlyle's language never lacks spice; yet in these very words — these bitter words — lies the answer to his objection, and to his recommendation that we should give up fiction and stick to fact, that we should cease to write novels, rhymes, tragedies, farces, — romances

generally, — and that we should write instead only history. Whoever would write good history must forget himself, with his "vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds;" he must try to see the fact before him as it works out its own salvation, independently of him. But ourselves are curiously interesting things, not only to ourselves but also to others. We are like so many mirrors of different shapes, set at different angles; the real world passes before us and we reflect it, but no two precisely in the same way. The historian turns himself towards each of his fellow-mirrors, tries to note how the reflection they present differs from his own, and so to correct his own by theirs and theirs by his own, until he gets something like a faithful image of the real world as it goes on outside of them all. The romance-maker is content to study just his own little private reflection, and to give it for what it is worth, with all its distortions of "vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds." Now, one of the "vanities" of weak human nature is what we call poetic justice, the liking to have things as we should personally wish them to happen. And one of the "grudgings" of human nature is the grudging to spend time and trouble over dry things instead of exciting ones. And, finally, one of the "ravenous hungers" of humanity is the craving that certain vague things called Ideals should somehow be made to take on flesh and blood, and should act out before us all the beautiful and daring things that we

should so much like to do if we only could. Plain fact cannot, or at any rate does not, satisfy these weaknesses — if we may call them weaknesses — of ours. And because plain fact will not satisfy us, the record of plain fact, which is history, will not, however nobly treated, entirely satisfy us. Leaving, however, for the moment, the romantic treatment of life, we must now examine the historical treatment of life, the unbiassed record of plain fact.

5. **History: Interconnection of Facts.** — We have just seen that Narration is easier than Description, because whereas Description tries to put into language, which has only one dimension — extension in time — solid objects, which have three dimensions — extension upwards, outwards, and sideways in space — Narration, on the other hand, has but to deal with events which, like language, have only one dimension — extension in time. That is all true, and yet it is also false: true, because a single event has simply duration, simply begins and after a while is done; false, because every moment there are happening millions and millions of events all at once; false still more, because each of these myriad events acts upon its neighbor, and is itself in its turn reacted upon. As a single shift of the kaleidoscope will change to the least detail the whole pattern, so the slightest shift of action in the world — a Cæsar crossing a River Rubicon, a Martin Luther tearing down papistical tyrannies from a church's walls — may alter

the whole course of human life. Such single events do not simply happen; they change all the other happenings about them and to follow them. The difficulty seems to come back on us. To represent merely a simple succession of single events would not be difficult: we should merely have to jot them down one after another as the bricklayer lays one brick upon the other. Life, however, is no such simple succession of single events, but rather a succession of whole armies of events marching abreast; nor is the succession simple either, but an immensely complicated succession of causes which are at the same time effects and of effects which are at the same time causes. All this welter of confusion must, nevertheless, be drilled into the single-file march of language.

6. **Guides for Selecting the Facts in Historical Writing: Interest.** — The problem seems stupendous, impossible, but yet we make shift to solve it somehow. We are all reporters of experience, and experience has taught us a practical shorthand by which we can learn to keep some sort of pace with her. This shorthand is Interest. We take down what our special interest leads us to select; the rest we reject; nay, we are hardly even aware of its existence.

7. **How Judgment should act as a Check on Interest.** — Interest will naturally guide us in Selection, but we should not merely pander to interest. What is superficially striking is not always of real or lasting

interest. The horrors of history are not always the essential facts of history, nor is picturesqueness a test of importance. Milton, for instance, was a picturesque figure — a champion of liberty, a political martyr, a poet, and blind, and this is what Macaulay, eager for a picturesque figure, made of him.

"If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes; such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die."

Now read what seem to have been the plain facts in the case:—

"His personal character was, owing to political motives, long treated with excessive rigour. The reaction to Liberal politics at the beginning of this century substituted for this rigour a somewhat excessive admiration, and even now the balance is hardly restored, as may be seen from

the fact that a late biographer of his stigmatises his first wife, the unfortunate Mary Powell, as 'a dull and common girl,' without a tittle of evidence except the bare fact of her difference with her husband, and some innuendoes (indirect in themselves, and clearly tainted as testimony) in Milton's own divorce tracts. On the whole, Milton's character was not an amiable one, nor even wholly estimable. It is probable that he never in the course of his whole life did anything that he considered wrong; but, unfortunately, examples are not far to seek of the facility with which desire can be made to confound itself with deliberate approval. That he was an exacting, if not a tyrannical, husband and father, that he held in the most peremptory and exaggerated fashion the doctrine of the superiority of man to woman, that his egotism in a man who had actually accomplished less would be half ludicrous and half disgusting, that his faculty of appreciation beyond his own immediate tastes and interests was small, that his intolerance surpassed that of an inquisitor, and that his controversial habits and manners outdid the license even of that period of controversial abuse, — these are propositions which I cannot conceive to be disputed by any competent critic aware of the facts."

SAINTSBURY: *A History of Elizabethan Literature*, pp. 316–317.

8. Guides for Selecting the Facts in Historical Writing: Sympathy. — For any one who wishes to record fact truly and vividly, there is, according to Carlyle, "one grand and invaluable secret:" to keep the eyes open and the heart open. The value of keeping our eyes open — interest — we have already discussed; the

value of keeping our hearts open — sympathy — will be obvious to any one who has read a biography in which the writer's sympathy or fellowship with his subject brought out sides of his character which would, under other circumstances, have been passed by unnoticed. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, for instance, is so great because Boswell's eyes and heart were open to the plain facts before him.

9. Guides for Choosing the Facts in Historical Writing: Rejection. — James Boswell was not, however, merely a great, soft-hearted child; he was an artist, one of the greatest that ever tried to save a few valuable facts out of the vast flood of experience. He not only knew how to see, but what to see, and seeing, to save. To save gems he was willing to throw away dross. In history, whether it be of the world or of a summer vacation, rejection accompanies selection.

Except from actual practice in writing it is hard to learn what kinds of facts it is best to reject. Two hints may, however, be of service: (1) reject whatever does not play in the narrative a part of either cause or effect; (2) reject whatever is dependent upon a biassed judgment. As to the second point, we all need to observe peculiar caution, for it is not easy to learn what influences affect our judgments and to allow for their distortion.

10. Romance: the Test of the Fact not Literal Truth but Consistency. — The main characteristic of romance is that it seems at first sight to be independent of fact.

Indeed, according to Mr. Oscar Wilde, it does not seem to matter what lies we tell in romance, provided only that we tell them with a decorously grave face; for the great trouble with modern fiction is, if we may believe him, that it is too fond of parading in the lion's skin of fact. This may be overstating the matter a little, but there is evidently sense in what Mr. Wilde says. If we are going to write truth, — that is to say, history, — let us by all means be accurate. If, on the contrary, we are writing fiction, why should we not, if we choose, amuse ourselves in any way we please? why should we bother ourselves about fact at all? On the other hand, we may well ask ourselves whether Rider Haggard's impossible adventures of impossible people are justified because fiction has nothing to do with fact; and whether such an improbable plot as —

> "Hey diddle, diddle,
> The cat and the fiddle,
> The cow jumped over the moon,"

is good art. Certainly not. Romance is not history; but then romance is not a synonym for nonsense. There is truth in romance; but it is truth not to bald fact, but to ideals. In romance we are writing or reading something which we can see as a consistent whole. We understand what the author is aiming at, and we keep pace with his thought. All that we demand is that he shall tell us something that hangs together, that is consistent. This is the word

which expresses the truth which there is, or should be, in romance — consistency, hanging together. The trouble with the statement that

"The cow jumped over the moon,"

is, not that it is a lie, — the statements that Paris gave the golden apple to Venus, or that Tom Jones kicked Blifil, or that poor little Paul Dombey died, are lies no less, — the trouble with the cow's jumping over the moon is that it is not a consistent lie, that it does not hang together. In fine, we are willing in romance to imagine anything but the incongruous. If cows be cows, and moons be moons, it is obviously out of character and inappropriate for any cow to jump over any moon. The verses thus become mere nonsense verses, amusing by their very contradictions; and all bad novels, like those of E. P. Roe or Albert Ross, are bad for precisely the same reason, because the characters seem untrue and inconsistent to the imagination, if we regard them as anything better than nonsense.

11. Elements of All Narrative. — It is from the principle of consistency, whether to an ideal or to fact, that all the principles which may guide us in writing narrative are derived. Every narrative has four elements: (1) the plot — that is, what happened; (2) the character — that is, the persons to whom it happened; (3) the situation — that is, the place

where and the time when it happened; (4) the purpose — or the reason why the author tells us that it happened. Corresponding to these four elements are four test questions, which we shall do well, for a while, to ask ourselves in regard to every narrative we write or read: (1) What? (2) Who? (3) Where and when? (4) Why?

12. **The Purpose.** — Although the purpose of a narrative is apt to be the last thing which the reader comes to understand, it is properly one of the first conceptions in the author's mind. The author's purpose may be merely to amuse, as in *Pickwick Papers;* to amuse, and at the same time to represent human nature, as in *Les Trois Mousquetaires;* to present to the reader facts which lead to a distinct ethical inference, as in *Anna Karénina;* to present ethical rules illustrated by accompanying facts, as in the typical Sunday-school story; to represent what the author supposes to be merely the facts, from which the reader may draw any inference he chooses, as in the work of the modern realists; or to group facts of investigation and imagination in such a way that the reader is stirred to greater sympathy with the various joys and sorrows to which humanity is subject. Whatever the purpose in our minds may be, however, we shall do well (1) to realize definitely what it is, and (2) to weigh carefully, before beginning our narrative, the several means for attaining it. In Kipling's *A Matter of Fact*, for instance, is an

account of three journalists who had together seen a sea-serpent, and had each his especial object in view in presenting the "facts" in the case to the public. One was anxious to make his personal part in the affair as prominent as possible; another had set his heart on confirming by minute details the unimpeachable truth of his narrative; and a third, knowing that the stories of his two companions would scarcely be believed, had determined to give a colorless account of the occurrence, convincing by its artlessness. With such a purpose in view, each then chose the means which seemed to him most likely to produce the desired effect.

13. The Plot and the Characters. — Having defined the purpose, the moral, the next thing is to express its working through live people. Here novelists diverge: some first work out their plot, and let their characters develop as they may; others make elaborate character studies, and pay no heed to plot. Either extreme is obviously bad. Over-attention to plot produces results like those of Gaboriau, Anna Katherine Green, and Rider Haggard; too much interest in character leads, or is apt to lead, to tiresome psychological analysis, as frequently in Henry James, Paul Bourget, Howells, and George Eliot. Mere plot-interest excites for the time being, but leaves the mind debilitated. Mere character study, with its splitting of psychological hairs, and endless pro'ing and con'ing about motives, is, after all,

demoralizing in its effects, in that it makes the reader abnormally morbid. The best method is not that which rips a character open to pick out the nerves and arteries and study their quivering, but that which works as nature works, by building up, by putting together, by description according to behavior.

Here it may be necessary to remind the student of the importance of action in narrative. What we know people about us by is their behavior in all kinds of situations. If we wish to present a cruel character, therefore, we should not talk about his cruelty, but put him in a position where, if he is really cruel, he will act cruelly, as Mr. Hyde does in Stevenson's famous story.

14. Situation. — In bringing out clearly the characters and the plot, nothing will be found more helpful than asking ourselves where we mean to have the acts which make up the body of our narrative take place, and when. Here description rightly enters into modern narrative, and proves itself indispensable; for on it depends the whole background, or stage-setting, as it were, against which the action stands out in strong relief, or from which it gains peculiar characteristics. The acts that make up narrative, we must notice, are concrete events. They must take place at some given time and at some given spot. At any other time, at any other place, what occurred would be in some way different. In Guy de Maupassant's

story called *Moonlight*, for instance, it is on the place and the time that the whole plot turns, for the old priest's heart could have softened only under such influences as those with which a moonlight night in the country surrounded him.

15. The Beginning; The Plan; Climax. — Three additional points it is necessary to have clearly in mind. First, whatever the narrative may be, and wherever and whenever the events in question occur, it is well to get about the narrating of them as soon as possible. The first thing to do is to get the characters in motion. When they are once acting there will be opportunities enough to define more clearly the other elements on which we have seen that narrative also depends. Second, narrative must, of course, move forward, but it should not move unsteadily, by starts and leaps. We may, for instance, follow in any given instance the logical rather than the strictly chronological order of events, but we shall err if we pass repeatedly from one point of view to the other. Again, we may choose to present a series of events as one of the actors saw them, or as a looker-on saw them, or, successively, in both ways; but it would be unwise to confuse the two methods or frequently to interrupt the narrative by passing from one to the other. Third, climax tells strongly in story-telling. We should work steadily up to the point of our narrative, and then stop. What is really of most importance will then occupy an appropriately prominent position.

EXERCISE.

1. Write (1) a narrative for the material of which you are indebted to history; (2) a narrative the material of which you draw from your own experience.

2. Compare the different aspects of the same subject brought out by an historical painting and an historical narrative.

3. Compare, as far you can, the material used by Scott in *Ivanhoe*, Dumas in the *Three Guardsmen*, and Freeman, Froude, and Carlyle in their best-known historical works.

4. Test a number of news-narratives from typical daily papers, to determine how far the material at the writers' hands has been presented in an unnecessarily "sensational" fashion.

5. Try to write an impartial account of an event, or series of events, in regard to which you are likely to be strongly prejudiced.

6. Try to reduce to simplicity and effectiveness a wandering and confused narrative, by striking out all details that do not essentially, as cause or as effect, concern the main point of the story.

7. What differences can you detect in the "purposes" of Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, Hume,

and Bancroft, in writing the histories that bear their names?

8. Cite narratives, historical or fictitious, in which you plainly recognize the part played by "character" and "situation," as distinguished from "plot."

9. Cite narratives, historical or fictitious, that show overdevelopment of plot, too little plot, too much character-study, too little character-study, too distinct a "purpose," a "purpose" not sufficiently distinct.

CHAPTER V.

CRITICISM.

1. Literary Criticism and Its Importance.— Criticism is an expression of opinion as to the worth or appropriateness of some one's acts or conduct, or as to the worth or appropriateness of any work of art, whether the art to which it pertains be a fine art or a useful art. We are here, however, concerned with criticism only in a more limited sense, as an expression of opinion in regard to the worth of any piece of writing whatsoever; *i.e.*, literary criticism. How common it is for us, in an age when most of the student's knowledge and much of his amusement come to him through books, to express our opinions on such matters in writing and conversation, it is not hard to see, nor how important a part criticism of this sort plays in the life of every educated man.

2. The First Requisite: a Knowledge of the Facts. — In order to criticise a piece of written work fairly, it is first necessary to understand not only what the author has done, but what he has tried to do. Just what, we must ask ourselves, has the author said, and, furthermore, what has been his object in saying it. What was the time and what the circumstances under which he wrote? What was his material? What aim did he have in view, — to amuse, to instruct,

to inform, to incite, to warn? In making up one's opinion, for instance, about Mr. Goldwin Smith's recent history of the United States, it is important to bear in mind that the author is an Englishman, long resident in Canada, that he writes primarily for Englishmen, and that his object is merely to present a clear outline of the political history. In the case of a translation of Horace, again, it would be necessary to notice whether the version was made with the object of preserving merely the thought of the original, or with the object of preserving the poetical charm of the original as well.

3. **Judgment must be Rendered in Accordance with the Facts.** — As a rule, we must judge an author by the relation between what he has done and what he has tried to do. We may, to be sure, quarrel with him at the outset for aiming too high or too low; but criticism on this point, although it can scarcely fail to bring up important questions of art, is after all another matter. What is, strictly speaking, in the critic's hands for decision, is the question whether the writer has done well the work which he has undertaken. Now, obviously, Mr. Goldwin Smith's history of the United States should not be judged on the same basis as another book on the same subject written by an American, on a larger or a smaller scale, considering the subject from another point of view, and explicitly addressed to an American audience; nor should Mr. A. J. Butler's translation of the *Divine*

Comedy, which aims only to render Dante's thought in the most literal fashion, be judged on the same basis as the version of the *Purgatory* by Mr. Shadwell, who attempts to reproduce not only the thought but the music of the great poem.

4. Structure: the Beginning. — At the opening of a piece of literary criticism it is frequently necessary to devote a paragraph to such introductory matter as will explain to the reader why the book in question deserves notice, who the author is and why he is well or ill qualified for the task, and what the particular circumstances, if any, were under which the work was written. The following, for instance, is the beginning of a review in the New York *Nation* for Oct. 26, 1893, of the late Professor Ten Brink's *Shakspere*: —

SHAKSPERE: *Fünf Vorlesungen aus dem Nachlass von Bernhard ten Brink.* Strassburg: Trübner, 1893.

"At the time of his death, in January, 1892, Ten Brink had brought his *History of English Literature* only to the threshold of the Elizabethan period, and had not made Shakspere the subject of any such long and thorough investigation as he had bestowed on Chaucer. At the same time, Shakspere had long been a favorite study with him. It was the great dramatist that formed for him the central attraction of English philology, and dispelled whatever misgivings he might at any time have had concerning the narrowness of his specialty. After his untimely death, therefore, it was natural that the pupils

who had been delighted with his academic lectures upon Shakspere should wish to see them in print. The manuscript proved unavailable, and so, as a second choice, his literary executors decided to publish a course of popular lectures delivered by him in 1888 at Frankfort-on-the-Main. These form the contents of the volume before us."

5. **Structure: the Summary.** — After such prefatory matter as is necessary comes what may be called the summary. Here there is opportunity for the display of skill in concise narration or exposition; for, before passing judgment on the book in question, it is our duty to inform the reader just what the gist of its contents is. In this lies, in most cases, a large part of the value of a good review. Granted that we know in brief what there is in a book, we may know all that we care to know about it. In the case of the volume of lectures mentioned in Section 4, for instance, the reviewer and critic devotes five successive paragraphs to stating the main points of the five lectures, — an amount of information which would, for the general reader, suffice.

6. **Structure: the Decision.** — After the summary comes an opinion as to the value of the book as a whole, and as to the relation of the parts to the whole. To this may be added, usually in a separate paragraph, the mention of such errors as are not in themselves important. The concluding paragraph of the review already referred to will give the student

a general idea of this important part of literary criticism : —

"From this brief account it will appear that the lectures are in no sense a contribution to Shaksperian scholarship. We have not here such a treatment of the subject as we doubtless should have had if the gifted author had lived a few years longer. Still, just as it is, the little volume is worthy of a cordial welcome. It reads pleasantly, and is characterized by urbanity and good sense. Here and there, too, imbedded in a context of easy popular exposition, one lights upon observations that go to the heart of the matter, and testify to riches held in reserve. And, after all, we doubtless have here, unencumbered with any philological scaffolding, the main substance of what Ten Brink would have had to say in a more learned treatise. We may note in conclusion that the title-page is faced by a spirited etching of the author, and that the book is handsomely printed. One or two trifling misprints have come to our attention: *Porzia*, p. 53, but *Portia*, p. 146 and elsewhere ; *Hindergrund*, p. 94."

EXERCISE.

1. Write reviews of two recent books: (1) a volume of essays, travels, biography, or science ; (2) a volume of poetry, a novel, or a play.

2. Read Arnold's essay on the Function of Criticism at the Present Time, and comment on its contents.

3. Test the value of a number of newspaper book-reviews. Notice whether they are merely complimentary, unnecessarily condemnatory, or judicially fair.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPOSITION.

1. Distinction between the Two Great Classes of Composition. — Just as Description and Narration deal with the outer world of scenes and happenings, so do Exposition,[1] Argument, and Persuasion deal with the inner world of thoughts and feelings. And just as the highest aim of Description and Narration is to produce illusion, so the highest aim of Exposition, Argument, and Persuasion is to impart knowledge or to influence belief and action.

2. Exposition is Beneficial to Intellectual Growth. — The qualities of mind which bring success in Exposition and Argument are of a different order from those which bring success in Narration and Description. The brilliancy, facile wit, and fancy of the good novelist are by no means to be despised; but they stand less high in the catalogue of virtues that education lays most stress on than the ability to reason, to infer, to explain, and to prove — powers which betoken sound and vigorous intellectual life. We need perhaps to cultivate our imaginations, but we need above all to make sure of the guiding faculties of life — the reason and the understanding. Intelligent

[1] For a definition of Exposition, see Introduction, page 4.

thinking must, therefore, be our aim during the remainder of this course of study. In acquiring habits of intelligent and coherent thought, nothing, we shall discover by experience, is more helpful than practice in written Exposition. For, unless we can express what we think, it is useless ever to pretend that we know what we think. How little we really understand any given subject we never fully realize until we are obliged to speak or write connectedly about it.

In general, then, the educative importance of Exposition — which we take for the moment, without further definition, to be simply the coherent and intelligent expression of thought — is that it checks the overhasty leaps of the imagination by forcing a clearer understanding of what the leap is for and to. It counteracts the opposite danger of entertaining at the same time too many conflicting ideas by forcing us to subordinate, at least for the time being, all other ideas to the one we are in the act of expounding. It forces us also to know what we know clearly, instead of after the hazy fashion of the mere unproductive reader. It shows us, finally, the real difficulty and complexity of thoughts which we have perhaps been in the habit of talking about with a self-confident assumption of knowledge.

Discipline of thought in general is not, however, the only service of Exposition. We shall need it in fulfilling the duties of any profession or branch of trade we may enter. Everywhere — in law, in medi-

cine, in teaching, in preaching, in business — we shall find it of the utmost importance to be able to give others an intelligible and coherent account of our ideas. Often, indeed, plain Exposition is a better means of convincing others than Argument itself. Understanding what a man's ideas are must in any case be the first step towards accepting them.

3. The Subject-Matter of Exposition. — The subject-matter with which Exposition deals is not perceptions, but ideas. Thoughts, ideas, generalizations — such subject-matter is always essentially the same, in that it comprises our reflections upon or about things outside us. Now, things outside us, we should notice, are always particular things: this particular horse, for example, or that particular horse. Horse in general nowhere exists in the outer world, though it may readily exist in our thought. We can describe a particular horse as so many hands high, and with such and such characteristics; but we obviously cannot describe horse in general; for, if we give him particular characteristics of color or shape or size, he ceases to be horse in general and becomes the particular animal we describe.

What, then, can we say about horse in general? Mr. Stormonth, in his dictionary, is satisfied with saying, a familiar domestic animal. Richard III., fighting on Bosworth field, cried: "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" The Psalmist, on the other hand, said: "An horse is a vain thing

for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength." Here we learn certain facts about horse in general; to wit, that he is in Mr. Stormonth's opinion a familiar domestic animal, that King Richard longed for one of the horse kind for safety, and that the sacred writer held the strength of a horse no safety. All this knowledge has to do with no particular horse: a horse may be white or black or brown or bay, and yet be a familiar domestic animal, yet be for King Richard a means of safety, yet be in the Psalmist's thought no means of safety.

Again, suppose we wish to know all that is essential to this idea of horse in general, all that modern science has agreed on concerning him. We turn, say, to an encyclopædia article on Horse. In the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under that general title, is a solid article of nearly eighty columns, stating as succinctly as possible what the several learned writers suppose to be the most essential and interesting present knowledge concerning horse in general. First, they take up his zoölogical descent from tapir-like little animals living in the eocene period; then the horse's anatomy, history, management, breeding, stable-management, saddle-management, and use for racing. Descriptions of particular sample parts and animals, narratives of particular episodes in horse-history, enter into the course of the article; but the whole drift of the essay is simply to make as clear as possible this conception of horse in general. Theoretically, Exposition always expounds the nature or

character of something *in general.* Practically, it may deal either with an object in general or with anything that may be considered as an integral idea : the character of Napoleon, for instance, the Franco-Prussian War, or, in brief, any subject about which one could write an essay or a review.

4. **Unity in Exposition.** — Since Exposition is simply the explanation of a thought, every good Exposition is capable of being reduced to a single term, which contains the idea expounded in its most general form ; that is, we shall find on examination that in the coherent treatment of expository matter there is always one central idea from which all the threads of Exposition proceed. All the work of Herbert Spencer, for instance, is the expounding of a single, simple idea, which may be expressed in untechnical language somewhat as follows : everything in the universe is continually changing in accordance with fixed laws. If all expositions of whatever sort, whether they include only a few spoken words or volumes upon volumes of close print, are reducible to a single, simple idea, it follows that if we understand the principles on which the expounding of a single, simple idea is based we understand the principles on which all Exposition is based. These principles we shall now consider.

5. **Method of Collecting Material for Exposition.** — Thinking is simply the process of arranging our perceptions according to their different kinds, and Exposition is

nothing but the making clear of the classifications we have thus made. The first question, therefore, that we have to ask ourselves when we are beginning the exposition of a given subject is, What *kind* of a thing is it? When we have answered that question we can take our own answer as a point of departure for a new inquiry, and ask, What kind of thing is *it?* Proceeding in this fashion, we are not likely to encounter any great practical difficulty in collecting material for Exposition. For instance, let us suppose that Mr. Stormonth, in writing his dictionary, asks himself, when he comes to the idea of horse in general, What kind of thing is horse in general? An animal. But what kind of animal? A domestic animal. But what kind of domestic animal? A familiar domestic animal. And for practical purposes Mr. Stormonth thinks this classification sufficient, though obviously he might have continued the process indefinitely, until he had added to his first simple definition all the limitations which the authors of the article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* have specified.

Perhaps, however, the best illustration of this method of questioning one's self or others in order to obtain material for Exposition, comes from Plato. He is trying to find out what sort of thing a sophist is. He intends eventually to say that a sophist is like an angler, and so he goes to work to expound what an angler is. We shall notice how every step in the specification of what an angler is, is an answer to the possible question, What sort of thing is this?

Stranger. Let us begin by asking whether he [an angler] is a man having or not having art, but having some other power.

Theaetetus. He is clearly a man of art.

Str. And there are two kinds of arts?

Theaet. How is that?

Str. There is agriculture, and the tending of mortal creatures; and the art of constructing or moulding vessels, as we term them, and there is the art of imitation; all these may properly be called by a single name.

Theaet. What do you mean? And what is the name?

Str. He who brings into existence something that did not exist before is said to be a producer, and that which is brought into existence is said to be produced.

Theaet. True.

Str. And all the arts which were just now mentioned are characterized by this power of producing?

Theaet. They are.

Str. Then let us sum them up under the name of productive art.

Theaet. Very good.

Str. Next follows the whole class of learning and acquiring knowledge, together with trade, fighting, hunting; since none of these produces anything, but is only engaged in conquering by word or deed, or in preventing others from conquering things which exist and have already been produced — in each and all of these branches there appears to be an art which may be called acquisitive.

Theaet. Yes, that is the proper name.

Str. Seeing, then, that all arts are either acquisitive or productive, in which class shall we place the art of the angler?

Theaet. Clearly in the acquisitive class.

Str. And the acquisitive may be subdivided into two parts: there is voluntary exchange, which is effected by gifts, hire, purchase; and the other part of acquisitive, which takes by force of word or deed, may be termed forcible exchange?

Theaet. That is implied in what has been said.

Str. And may not this forcible exchange be again subdivided?

Theaet. How?

Str. Open force may be called fighting, and secret force may have the general name of hunting?

Theaet. Yes.

Str. And there will be a want of discrimination in not further dividing the art of hunting.

Theaet. How would you make the division?

Str. Into the hunting of living and of lifeless prey.

Theaet. Yes, if both kinds exist.

Str. Of course they exist; the hunting after lifeless things having no special name, except in the case of diving, and such small matters may be omitted; the hunting after living things may be called animal hunting.

Theaet. Yes.

Str. And animal hunting may be truly said to have two divisions, land-animal hunting, which has many kinds and names, and the other the hunting after animals who swim, — water-animal hunting?

Theaet. True.

Str. And of swimming animals, one class lives on the wing and the other in the water?

Theaet. Certainly.

Str. Fowling is the general term under which the hunting of all birds is included.

Theaet. True.

Str. The hunting of the water animals has the general name of fishing.

Theaet. Yes.

Str. And shall we not divide this sort of hunting also into two principal kinds?

Theaet. What are they?

Str. There is one kind which takes them in nets, the other which takes them by a blow.

Theaet. What do you mean, and how do you distinguish them?

Str. As to the first kind — since all that surrounds and encloses anything to prevent egress, may be rightly called an enclosure —

Theaet. Very true.

Str. For which reason twig baskets, casting-nets, nooses, creels, and the like may all be termed "enclosures."

Theaet. True.

Str. And therefore this first kind of hunting may be called by us hunting with enclosures, or something of that sort?

Theaet. Yes.

Str. The other kind, which is practised with hooks and three-pronged spears, when summed up under one name, may be called striking, unless you, Theaetetus, can find some better name?

Theaet. No matter about the name — that will do very well.

Str. There is one mode of striking which is done at night, and by the light of a fire, and is called by the hunters themselves firing, or spearing by firelight.

Theaet. True.

Str. And the fishing by day is called by the general name of "fishing with barbs," since the spears, too, are barbed at the point.

Theaet. Yes; that is the term.

Str. Of this barb-fishing, that which strikes the fish, who is below, from above is called spearing, because this is the way in which the three-pronged spears are used.

Theaet. Yes; that is a term which is employed.

Str. Then there is only one kind remaining.

Theaet. What is that?

Str. When the blow which is given by the hook is not as with the spear fixed in any part of the prey, but about the head and mouth, the movement is from below upwards, and the fish is drawn out with reeds and rods: — What is the right name of that, Theaetetus?

Theaet. I suspect that we have now discovered the object of our search.

Str. Then now you and I have come to an understanding not only about the name of the angler's art, but about the definition of the thing. One half of all art was acquisitive — half of the acquisitive was conquest or taking by force, half of this was hunting, and half of the hunting was hunting animals, half of this was hunting water-animals — of this again, the under half was fishing, half of fishing was striking; the first half of this was fishing with a barb, and one half of this, being the kind which strikes with a hook and draws the fish from below upwards, is the kind which we are now seeking, and which is hence denoted angling (ἀσπαλιευτικὴ, ἀνασπᾶσθαι).

Plato: *Sophist* (Jowett's translation, edition of 1871, vol. iii., pp. 478–80).

6. Method of Collecting Material for Exposition: Exclusion and Analogy. — To exhaust the possibilities of Exposition we must add a second test question to our inquiry. Our first question is: What *is* the thing we are thinking of? Our second question is: What kind of thing is it *not?* Naturally, moreover, in dealing with an entirely new, or a somewhat unfamiliar subject, we are far more likely to know what it is not than what it is. Even in the analysis of a familiar subject it is often natural to lay stress at once on the qualities or characteristics it does not possess. Of the British Museum, for instance, we might say that it is an enormous library, a well-arranged library, a library where the scholar is sure, as a rule, to find almost all the printed material he wishes to use; but we should be just as likely to begin by stating that it is *not* a library from which books could be taken to one's house — a proposition that at once distinguishes it from some other large libraries. Again, if we were asked to expound so familiar a subject as Harvard College, we might easily make distinctions of importance by showing that it is not entirely a local institution, not a sectarian institution, not a co-educational institution.

A third test question, What is the thing like? is especially valuable for literary purposes. It gives vividness to the idea of the thing expounded by associating it with ideas more familiar or more striking than itself. We could readily give a foreigner, for instance, some idea of what our government is

if we laid stress on the points of similarity between our political organization and those with which he is familiar in his own country. An American university, we could tell an Englishman, is in such and such respects like an English university, and in such and such respects like a German university. We must not forget, however, that comparisons and analogies are dangerous, because they are by nature inexact statements. To say what a thing is like is obviously not saying what it is.

7. **Practical Hints.** — A practical hint as to the most convenient method of procedure in Exposition will perhaps be of value. It is often worth while for the beginner, before undertaking to expound a subject, to take three sheets of paper, and to write at the top of the first sheet the words, What it is *not;* at the top of the second sheet the words, What it is; at the top of the third sheet the words, What it is like. As ideas occur to the student, from observation or reading, he can then jot them down on the appropriate sheet. In this way the substance of an essay will grow almost without conscious effort on the part of the writer, and shape itself into a very fair orderliness. For instance, let us suppose that, realizing that criticism is one of the most important and characteristic *genres* of literature at the present day, I undertake to expound my idea of what criticism is, and that I have prepared my three sheets of paper for notes. I happen, we will suppose, to hear some one say of

a shrew or a gossip, that she is a very *critical* person — forever finding fault. Is that, then, what I mean by criticism — finding fault? Certainly not. I therefore jot down on my first sheet of paper: "Criticism is *not* mere fault-finding." Again, we will suppose, I think of going to a certain play, and, asking a friend whether it is worth while or not, I am advised to consult So-and-So, who is excessively fond of the theatre. So-and-So is evidently held to be a good critic because he is fond of what he criticises. The idea is suggestive, and I enter on my second sheet the note that criticism *is* sympathetic, modifying the statement, on second thought, by entering on my first sheet again the memorandum that of course criticism is not mere finding favor any more than it is merely finding fault. On my third sheet observation might lead me to note that criticism is like justice, unprejudiced. Such memoranda, made mentally or recorded, are in most cases the necessary steps toward rendering to ourselves a clear account of our ideas.

8. **The Plan.** — Memoranda of the sort just mentioned are, however, far from constituting the skeleton of the Exposition itself, though they may suggest in the rough the order which it is best to pursue. When the material for the Exposition is all in, it is necessary to decide carefully upon the structure of the essay as a whole, determining at what point it is best under the circumstances to begin, and by what

steps and how rapidly it is well to lead up to the central idea. What such a plan should be may be gathered from the following skeleton of an interesting chapter in the *American Commonwealth.* Some such scheme Mr. Bryce must have worked on in the process of composition. The quality of style to be secured in Exposition, it should be noticed, is clearness, the various devices for securing which it is not necessary here to repeat.

The Universities. (Vol. ii., chap. ci.)

¶ 1. Introduction. General peculiarities of the history of American universities.

¶ 2. The founding of Harvard.

¶ 3. The founding of other colleges from 1693 to 1764.

¶ 4. Two types of American colleges: the "private" type.

¶ 5. Two types of American colleges: the "public" type.

¶ 6. Institutions that do not fall in either class.

¶ 7. Why treatment of the subject of American universities must be brief and orderly.[1]

¶ 8. *Statistics* in regard to colleges.

¶ 9. *General character of the universities and colleges:* the better class.

[1] In the rest of the skeleton headings printed in italics are those which Mr. Bryce himself inserted at the beginning of the paragraph in question.

¶ 10. General character of the universities and colleges: the poorer class.
¶ 11. The *revenues* of the colleges.
¶ 12. The *government* of the colleges: in State colleges.
¶ 13. The government of the colleges: in other colleges.
¶ 14. The government of the colleges: movement toward representation of graduates upon governing boards.
¶ 15. *The teaching staff:* in the East.
¶ 16. The teaching staff: in the West.
¶ 17. The teaching staff: salaries.
¶ 18. The teaching staff: social position.
¶ 19. *The students.*
¶ 20. *Buildings and external aspect.*
¶ 21. *Time spent in study.*
¶ 22. *Local distribution of universities and colleges.*
¶ 23. *System and methods of instruction:* the growth of the elective system.
¶ 24. System and methods of instruction: decay of the "recitation" system.
¶ 25. *Requirements for entrance.*
¶ 26. *Degrees and examinations:* degrees not awarded, as frequently in Europe, on the results of a single examination.
¶ 27. Degrees and examinations: contrast between the American system and that in vogue at Oxford and Cambridge.
¶ 28. Degrees and examinations: value of American degrees.

¶ 29. Degrees and examinations: laxity in granting degrees.

¶ 30. Degrees and examinations: social value of a degree.

¶ 31. *Post-graduate courses.*

¶ 32. *Professional and scientific schools.*

¶ 33. *Research* in American colleges.

¶ 34. *Aids to deserving students.*

¶ 35. *Social life of the students:* in general.

¶ 36. Social life of the students: fraternities.

¶ 37. *Religion:* a large number of the American colleges and universities are denominational.

¶ 38. Religion: religious exercises.

¶ 39. *The provision of university education for women:* co-education.

¶ 40. The provision of university education for women: separate institutions.

¶ 41. *General observations:* the great variety of American colleges.

¶ 42. General observations: American colleges are in a state of transition.

¶ 43. General observations: the struggle between the greater universities and the denominational colleges.

¶ 44. General observations: American universities free and popular; the alleged danger from the influence of small and weak colleges on high standards.

¶ 45. General observations: the higher learning is in no danger from such institutions, which do, in their way, a great deal of good.

¶ 46. General observation: conclusion: . . . "If I may venture to state the impression which the American universities have made upon me, I will say that while of all the institutions of the country they are those of which the Americans speak most modestly, and indeed deprecatingly, they are those which seem to be at this moment making the swiftest progress, and to have the brightest promise for the future. They are supplying exactly those things which European critics have hitherto found lacking in America; and they are contributing to her political as well as to her contemplative life elements of inestimable worth."

9. What is Indispensable to a Good Exposition. — Indispensable to a good Exposition are: (1) a definite subject, not too large for the writer's information; (2) an unprejudiced mind; (3) a clear conception of the capacity and previous information of the person, or persons, to whom the Exposition is addressed; (4) a good beginning; (5) orderly structure; (6) a conclusion that sums up, if possible, the matter contained in the whole Exposition.

10. Exercise. — It will not be necessary to print here materials for an exercise on the principles of Exposition. Good Expositions are so common in books, magazines, and even in newspapers, that it

will be easy for the student, especially under the direction of his instructor, to find an abundance of examples, both of what he should strive after, and of what he should shun. The writings of Mr. John Fiske, Prof. Huxley, and Prof. Tyndall may, as a rule, be recommended as good models of popular Exposition.

CHAPTER VII.

ARGUMENT.

1. Argument an Act of Judgment. — Three steps lead naturally toward the attitude of mind suitable for argument: (1) uncertainty in regard to the truth or falsity of a certain proposition; (2) information as to both sides of the question; (3) acceptance and defence of one side or the other. Argument is thus a more effective means of escaping paralysis of judgment than Exposition.[1] We cast in our lot for good and all, as it were, with an idea or belief, just as Hamlet, hesitating between life or death, based his final judgment on the results of an argumentative process. What he discussed with himself and the results of his reasoning may be represented as follows:—

Question. To be or not to be?

Pro. Sleep is peace, and death is but sleep.

Con. Sleep may not be peace, if the sleeper's conscience be not clean, and death may resemble sleep in this respect.

Ergo. As my conscience is not clean, I prefer to be.

When, therefore, we are confronted with other ways of thinking than ours, there are three courses we may take: (1) we may continue in a state of

[1] See above, page 93.

doubt and indecision; (2) we may surrender our own ideas and accept blindly those of others; or (3) we may accept one side or the other of the question, basing our acceptance on as strictly logical a demonstration as we should demand in mathematics.

2. Argument a Means of Self-defence. — Argument is for our thoughts what boxing is for our persons — an art of self-defence. Just as a "scientific" feather-weight may be completely victorious over a big bully who has not mastered the difference between an "underhand cut" and a "cross-counter," so in the arena of ideas a puny and flimsy idea often for the moment gets the better of a grand and strong idea, just because the puny idea was presented cleverly, while the grand idea did not know how to defend itself. There is, consequently, no sure protection against a domineering idea, except to meet it on its own ground, and to defeat its sophistical logic by sound argument. To know what sound argument is, is the purpose of our study now. It is based, we may premise, not on any arbitrary set of rules, but on a series of practical observations drawn from the usage of men who have had most weight in the serious affairs of life, where argument in weighing the pros and cons of a law, an action, a principle, an administration, has served them as both shield and sword.

3. The Dignity of Exposition and the Dangers of the Argumentative Attitude. — In the first place, however, a word or two as to the dangers of argumentation.

Exposition, the mere giving forth of facts, is calm, dignified, peaceful, and self-contained. The man who is unconcerned as to what others may think or say or believe in regard to his opinions, who goes on with the statement of his own views placidly and unobtrusively, is of the sort of stuff that Cæsars and Napoleons are made of. No one can fail to respect and admire the quiet firmness of him who never seeks to impose his own thoughts upon others, but as well declines to be imposed upon by others' thoughts. Matthew Arnold, a man who was, perhaps, above most men of our time passionately fond of convincing others of the right of his ideas and the error of theirs, has nevertheless felt the beauty of a thought and life into which argument and strife do not enter — a life lived as the stars live.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long, moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

If, then, we can live without demanding that things without us yield us love, amusement, and sympathy; if we can avoid pining when we note the fever of some differing soul; if, in short, we can rest contented with being a mere passive spectator of the life of the world at large, we can well dispense with the argumentative, and be content with the expository, mood. But if, on the other hand, we give way to the love of argument for the mere sake of argument, we shall be in a worse condition than that of the mere passive spectator. The born arguer, as most of us know by experience, will take nothing on trust, not even himself; he can say nothing without immediately turning upon himself with a petulant, Why did I say that rather than the opposite? He can do nothing without inquiring of his teased self, Why do I do that? or, Should I do this? If any one else makes the most innocent assertion, he contradicts for the mere pleasure of taking the other side. Indeed, the love of arguing, of weighing the pros and cons of every question that meets us, may become a disease, a recognized disease. Even when the passion for argumentation does not reach morbidity, it remains a state of mind to be sedulously avoided. Fitzgerald's complaint: —

> "Myself when young did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
> About it and about; but ever more
> Came out by the same door wherein I went;"

— this complaint we hear very frequently in these days.

4. Earnestness and Tact the Main Qualities called for in Argument. — The qualities of mind most necessary in argument are earnestness and tact. Earnestness goes straight to its goal, and impresses the reader or hearer by its vigor and intentness. Tact is, as it were, a practical form of sympathy, an actual putting of ourselves into the place of our hearer, accommodating ourselves to his level, to his prejudices. It may well be that this being all things to all men is morally dangerous, if carried too far; but in argument, in any form of discourse which desires to move or convince, it is virtually indispensable.

5. The Point at Issue. — More important even than earnestness and tact, which, after all, are merely advantages of manner in debate, is the habit of forming a distinct idea of the nature and extent of a question, and the exact point at issue, before attempting to offer arguments for or against it. What, the disputant should ask himself, do my opponent and I disagree about — a point of fact or a question of principle, a question of right or of expediency? Do I mean to assert that my opponent is surely wrong, or only probably wrong? wrong for always, or wrong only under certain circumstances? To answer such preliminary questions is often really to settle the whole matter amicably and without discussion, or to silence

our opponent by showing him that he has misunderstood us.

6. **The Proposition ; the Terms.** — Argument is possible only when there is a distinct proposition as its basis. We do not argue simply about the telegraph, for instance, but we may argue for or against the proposition that the government should purchase and control the telegraph systems of the United States. We must be careful, then, to have as the basis of any argument in which we may engage a distinct proposition, a distinct affirmation, which it is our object either to prove or to disprove.

We must be careful, too, to understand just what it is which we are to prove or to disprove. A proposition is, as it were, an equation between two terms. For example, in the proposition, "the formation of trusts is injurious to the public welfare," the two terms are (1) "the formation of trusts ;" and (2) "injurious to the public welfare." The proposition to be proved is that (1) falls under the head of (2) ; *i.e.*, that the formation of trusts belongs to that class of things which are injurious to the public welfare.

Complete proof is therefore impossible unless there be a distinct understanding as to what we mean by a trust, or the formation of a trust, and as to what we mean by "injurious to the public welfare." Otherwise, an opponent might rejoin, "I agree with you that what you mention is injurious to the public welfare, but I do not grant that it is, strictly speaking,

a trust;" or, "I agree with you that trusts have the effect you mention, but I do not grant that effects of that sort are injurious to the public welfare." Notice, then, that it is necessary, before complete logical proof is possible, for those who argue on the affirmative side of any question to be in complete accord with those who argue on the negative side as to the terms of which the question or proposition is composed.

7. **Definition of Terms.** — Defining the terms between which we wish to establish a given relation is often of the greatest importance, if we would avoid misconception and render refutation impossible. Take, for instance, the proposition, frequently upheld, that Pope was not a poet. Obviously, the great difficulty here is to define the term poet; for if the contestants could agree on what is involved in the term poet, the rest would be a mere matter of investigation. One writer on the subject, an undergraduate, satisfied himself with a literal interpretation of a definition taken from a dictionary, to wit, that a poet is a maker, a maker of verses. Pope made verses, therefore Pope was a poet. But then any rhymster must be a poet also, and a *reductio ad absurdum* could at any moment point out the fallacy which the looseness of the definition permits. Another writer contented himself with a definition based on Milton's reflection that he who would write poetry of a high order must make his life a true poem. Now, Pope was often

jealous, envious, hateful; his life was anything but a true poem: therefore, Pope was not a poet. Then with equal reason must Edgar Allan Poe, whom some critics go so far as to call the one true poet that America has produced, be denied the name of poet. The kind of definition which we are to give to the term poet is thus, in this case, the very root of the main issue itself.

8. Terms and the Special Issue. — In defining our terms we may find that we need a definition not only of a word as a word, of the sentiment associated with the word, of the full implication of the thought expressed in the word, but also of the limits and extent within which, for the purpose of this particular argument, we mean to take the word. For example, a very popular forensic topic at Harvard College some years ago was the question, Was Aaron Burr guilty of treason? In this case a preliminary analysis and limiting of the meaning of at least one term is all important. At first sight it might seem evident that the term "guilty" was self-explanatory, and that the question is simply equivalent to, Did Aaron Burr commit treason? But the court before which Aaron Burr was tried decided that he was not *guilty* of treason. The court did not in the least affirm that Burr did not commit treason; it had, on the contrary, very good grounds for thinking otherwise. According to law, however, a man cannot be considered guilty of treason unless there are *two* eye-

witnesses to an open treasonable act on the part of the accused. In Burr's case two such witnesses could not be produced, and consequently he escaped conviction for lack of admissible evidence. Nevertheless, Burr may have been morally guilty of the crime with which he was charged.

We really need, then, a division of the term "guilty." There are two kinds of guilt, legal and moral. Now, legally Burr's case is fully settled; there is no use in reopening it. We are consequently limited to the question: Was Burr morally guilty of treason? But a man may actually commit a crime or he may simply try to; in either case he is morally guilty. The proposition in question can thus be made still more specific by limiting it: Was Aaron Burr actually or only in intention guilty of treason?

9. The Special Issue. — The definition of the terms of our proposition thus leads to a preliminary analysis of the question, which results in a closer and closer shutting in of the issue, or rather, perhaps, a more and more rigorous shutting out of matter non-essential to a special and determining issue. The excluded matter will be such as is already agreed upon without question by the contestants, or such as is irrelevant or unimportant for the resolution of the special and determining issue. This will be clear from the following statement of the general and the special issues in Burke's well-known plea for reconciliation with America. The original issue, the general issue,

was, War or Peace? By analysis Burke showed that war meant in this case the attempt to coerce the colonies, and that peace could be secured only by compromise or concession. Further, coercion would have for its end the enforcement of legislation without representation; compromise would be allowing the colonies to purchase immunity from taxation without representation; concession could only result in allowing the colonies representation, or in relieving them from taxation. Now, as both sides would agree that representation was impossible on account of the geographical position of the colonies, the whole question turns on the point whether England should or should not tax the colonies. Instead of the general issue, War or Peace, we have, therefore, the triple issue, enforced taxation, temporary taxation, or no taxation. Burke then proceeds to show the evils of force and temporizing and the positive merits of honest concession.

10. Proof. — After we have defined our terms, as the process described in the preceding sections is technically called, the next step is to prepare a series of subordinate propositions, as a conclusion from all or most of which the proof of the main proposition must follow. For instance, if we wish to prove that the government should purchase and control the telegraph systems of the United States, we might devise the following method of proof.

I. The present system is (*a*) inconvenient and

(*b*) unfavorable to the present welfare of the people and (*c*) to industrial progress.

II. The government has a right to take possession of telegraph lines by purchase.

III. There would be many and great advantages in government ownership.

IV. The cost and inconvenience of the change suggested would be small.

V. Alleged objections to the change are of little weight.

VI. No change other than that suggested is practically or theoretically possible.

Proposition I., then, would prove that some change for the better is necessary; Propositions II., III., and IV., that the change suggested would be feasible and for the best interests of the country; Proposition V., that alleged or real objections do not hold, or are of comparatively little weight; Proposition VI. shuts out all other changes except those which would fall under the plan suggested. If these six propositions are true, then it is indisputably proved that the government should purchase and control the telegraph systems of the United States.

The next step in the example we have taken is to prove each one of these six subordinate propositions. Proposition I., for instance, that the present system is inconvenient and unfavorable both to the present welfare of the people and to industrial progress, might depend on the following series of lesser propositions:—

(1) The present system is a monopoly.
(2) It is productive of delays.
(3) The charges under it are extortionate.

The series might be easily extended. The truth of Proposition I. must thus be inferred from Propositions (1), (2), (3), etc. Propositions (1), (2), (3), etc., rest, in turn, upon evidence or testimony, or, in short, upon facts which are known to be true. Proposition (3), for instance, should be made to depend upon well-authenticated instances of extortionate charges.

11. Another Example of Proof. — To make perfectly clear the syllogistic process by which proof is attained, let us take another example, the arguments by which Burke supported the negative side of the special issue referred to in Section 9: Should England tax the American Colonies?

Proposition: England should not tax the American Colonies.

I. Taxation would be unjust, for —

(*a*) taxation without representation is tyranny.

II. Taxation would be inexpedient, for —

(*a*) The American colonies are too prosperous and powerful to be offended with safety.

(*b*) Voluntary contribution pays better than a forced levy, as is proved by the case of

1. Ireland.
2. Wales.
3. Chester.
4. Durham.

As, of course, projects which are unjust and inexpedient — which are not worthy to succeed and cannot succeed — should not be attempted, it follows that England should not tax the American Colonies.

12. Proof and Evidence. — As still another illustration, let us take the question in regard to Aaron Burr which we discussed in Section 8. Here legal guilt demands the *bona fide* testimony of two witnesses to an overt act of treason. Legally speaking, then, the special issue becomes, Are there, or are there not, two such witnesses to be found? Now, let us suppose that John Doe and Richard Roe offer themselves. Obviously the question turns at once on the personal character of these witnesses. Is their testimony on the face of it probable, we must ask ourselves; is it, that is to say, consistent with ordinary experience. If, for example, an ignorant camp-follower should testify that the astute Burr had confided to him his whole plan of subverting the United States government, could we accept his statement as probable? Is the testimony offered, we may further ask ourselves, consistent with the facts already

known in the case? is it also consistent with itself? Such questions suggest that we have still to consider more closely the kinds of evidence on which proof is based.

13. Kinds of Evidence. — Let us examine the kinds of evidence on which proof has been based in the illustrations we have already used. Burke's argument that taxation without representation is unjust is a matter of pure reasoning: it starts from a general principle and ends in a general principle; to wit, that the basis of taxation is a contract by which one party pays the other party to protect it. If, then, either the payment or the protection is wanting, the contract is null and void. Now, the Americans asserted that the protection England offered was valueless, and therefore declined to pay for it. So far Burke's argument is logical and sound, *provided* we can accept his premises. What he says is this. [Major Premise] Taxation without adequate return is unjust. [Minor Premise] The taxation of the American colonies is without adequate return. Conclusion: The taxation of the American colonies is unjust.

The real evidence needed now is to prove that the taxation of the American colonies is without adequate return. If this is true the conclusion is true, for we may accept the major premise as self-evident. Burke brings forward the necessary evidence by showing *signs* of American prosperity and of the needlessness of British protection and interference. The kind

of evidence here adduced, the argument from sign, is perhaps that most commonly used. Its purpose is to show, not that the proposition in question ought to be true, but that there are certain facts in existence which could not exist were the proposition not true. That the tracks of a dog are found in the sand, for instance, is proof conclusive that a dog had passed that way.

Again, Burke argues that if England left America to give only voluntary contributions, she would, in the long run, be the gainer. Here, again, Burke's logic is sound, provided that he can substantiate his minor premise that such is England's ordinary experience in her dealing with her dependencies. Here the evidence which he adduces is of the nature of examples. Certain things happened in Ireland, in Wales, at Chester, at Durham. This is the argument from example, valuable also in its way; for events are rarely or never unique: they have at least general points of similarity; and what happens in one case we can, in many instances, suppose will happen in other cases under circumstances substantially the same.

Or again, if in the trial of Burr a witness brought forward against him should show unmistakable signs of intoxication, we might doubt gravely as to the veracity or consistency of his testimony. This is the third species of evidence, the argument based on antecedent probability, which infers that a fact exists, or does not exist, from the fact we may naturally,

under the circumstances, understand why it might exist or not exist.

Pure logic in argument gives us only a provisional proof, — a proof provided that certain facts are established. These facts, generally speaking, may be established in any or all of three ways: (1) as likely to prove true, considering present conditions; (2) as apparent from present conditions; (3) as likely to be true under similar conditions.

14. Tests of Evidence. — The test questions we found useful in collecting the subject-matter for Exposition were, What is it? What is it not? What is it like? In collecting evidence for or against the truth of a proposition we may use, as is apparent from the preceding section, somewhat similar test questions: (1) Ought it to be true? (2) Is it true? (3) Is it like other cases that were true? The first question assumes the proposition as true, and tries to explain from known facts why it ought to be believed; the second does not assume the truth of the proposition, but shows from certain facts *how* it is true; the third simply confirms the first and the second. To put the case differently: (1) suggests reasons why the proposition is plausible; (2) reasons why it is positively true; and (3) reasons why it is not an exceptional case.

15. Some Kinds of Evidence are Stronger than Others. — Robert Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, says: "The air is not so full of flies in summer as it is at all times of invisible devils; this Paracelsus stiffly

maintains." In the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Prof. Ward writes that "any liquid . . . containing organic matter, or any solid food-stuff . . . allowed to stand exposed to the air, soon swarms with bacteria." Now, why do we believe in Prof. Ward's microbes and not in Burton's multitudinous devils? Because, we may perhaps answer, we can verify the former and not the latter. But, after all, unless we make an examination of food-stuff under such conditions with a powerful microscope, a feat very few of us are capable of actually performing or likely actually to perform, we are obliged to take Prof. Ward's word for his proposition, and to refuse to take Paracelsus' word for his. Paracelsus never *saw* a devil, we may urge, and Prof. Ward has seen bacteria. But Paracelsus said he had seen devils. In one of his works he "reckons up," says Burton, "many places in Germany, where they (devils) do usually walk in little coats, some two feet long." We are still, however, unconvinced; we say perhaps that Paracelsus *lied*, that we doubt his authority on such matters, that he may have written in good faith, but that on such subjects his eye was scarcely sane.

Here, then, we have a sort of evidence which involves at least two requirements: good faith and sanity. The part good faith plays is obvious; how far sanity enters into the question we can see by considering the situation a little more carefully. Paracelsus belonged to the uncritical age: he is, therefore, not to be relied on. Prof. Ward, on the

contrary, is not only a living authority, subject to cross-examination, but presumably in touch with the accurate ways of modern science: he is, therefore, to be relied on. But suppose that we could repeat the experience of Master Facius Cardan, who, his son tells us, conjured up, in the year of our Lord 1491, "seven devils, in Greek apparel, about forty years of age, some ruddy of complexion and some pale; and he asked them many questions, and they made ready answers that they were aerial devils, that they lived and died as men did, save that they were far longer lived." Suppose that we were to have such a vivid particular experience with devils; should we not be convinced of the existence of them? If, then, we have a direct personal experience of anything, however strange or improbable, it is practically impossible to restrain ourselves from believing in the reality of that experience. The farther we get away from direct personal experience, the less certain is any proof we may bring forward. This point of view suggests the following scheme of evidence.

16. A Scheme of the Relative Force of Different Sorts of Evidence.

I. Full Experience:

- (*a*) Direct: Myself as witness.
  [Desiderata: Sanity and good faith, subject to test in a decreasing degree from (*a*) to (*b*).]
- (*b*) Indirect.
  - (1) Living witnesses, subject to cross-examination, i.e., testimony.
  - (2) Dead witnesses, not subject to cross-examination, i.e., authority.

II. Inference after Partial Experience:	(*a*) Inference from circumstantial evidence: Sign. [Desiderata: In addition to sanity and good faith, good judgment, more liable to error in (*b*) than (*a*).]	
	(*b*) Inference from precedent: Example.	
III. Inference before Experience:	(*a*) Direct logical probability: *à priori* argument. [Desideratum: In addition to the above, correct reasoning].	Antecedent Probability.
	(*b*) Indirect logical probability: parabolic argument (fictitious example).	

17. The Strength and Weakness of the Kinds of Evidence: Evidence before Experience. — The weakest of all evidence is the fictitious example. Burton, for instance, proves the existence of witchcraft by the alleged example of Circe, whose charms transformed into beasts the companions of Ulysses. A little stronger than the fictitious example is the kind of parabolic reasoning so common in theological literature. The strength of the parable lies in the fact that its truth is supposedly self-evident. That such arguments, however, are merely hypotheses which require in their turn to be proved, even the tyro in reasoning can readily understand. Again, instead of taking a fictitious example, a fable, or a hypothetical case, we may discuss in general the nature of the case we are concerned in proving. We know nothing about the fact in the particular case under discussion; but in general we draw certain *à priori* inferences, as did Hegel when he established logically that there could not be a planet between Mars and Venus — a proposition afterwards disproved by

actual discovery. The value of the *à priori* method — the use, in brief, of evidence before experience — is in supplying an hypothesis. Darwin, for instance, merely verified by arguments from sign the theory of evolution, guessed long before by general conclusions of antecedent probability. Arguments based on evidence "before experience" cannot, then, be relied on for complete proof, efficacious as they may be in supplementing or introducing the results of evidence of other kinds. Arguments from sign, on the other hand, unless of the strongest possible kind, can rarely be accepted as conclusive without the confirmation afforded by arguments from antecedent probability. Unless there are reasons in general that dispose us to believe a proposition, even the facts which experience may bring forward in its favor lose much of their value.

18. Strength and Weakness of the Kinds of Evidence: Evidence after Partial Experience. — Evidence after partial experience, the most common sort of evidence, is evidence based either on inference from precedent, the soundest form of the argument from example, or on inference from a large number of facts already established; i.e., the argument from sign. The principle on which the first rests is that things which are alike in many points will also be alike in other points. Here the obvious danger is that the degree of likeness should prove insufficient. The advantage of the argument from example is that it is excellent in con-

firmation of inferences drawn from other species of evidence: when we have already shown anything to be true on other grounds, it is helpful also to show that it is not a solitary case, that other instances confirm in general the truth of our proposition. Stronger, however, than an inference from a parallel case is evidence of the second sort, which presents, in the form of the argument from sign, inferences from a large number of facts actually established about the case in point. Here the principle is that when several events — *a*, *b*, and *c*, for instance — are shown to go naturally or inevitably together, and when in a single case *a* and *b* have happened, we believe that *c* has also happened. If, for example, A has in his possession goods stolen from B, if A's footprints are found in the snow before B's window immediately after the theft, if A's hands are cut by the broken glass of B's window, and if A's hat was left in B's room at the time of the theft, we are partially or wholly justified in believing that A was concerned in the robbery of B. The danger of the argument from sign is that constantly associated with circumstantial evidence in the popular mind and abundantly illustrated by the fertile dramatic theme of the innocent man unjustly accused of wrong. Complete proof from partial experience is cumulative, depending on the number and character of the facts or signs adduced.

19. Strength and Weakness of the Kinds of Evidence: Evidence based on Full Experience. — Evidence based on

full experience is obviously the strongest form of evidence that can be brought forward in favor of any proposition. As its character and force may be readily seen from Section 15 above, and from the first main division in the Scheme in Section 16, we shall not need to discuss it further here.

20. Briefs for Argument. — Further details in regard to the construction of an argument belong either to a more elaborate treatise on argumentative composition, or fall under the general principles which govern the construction of the whole composition.[1] Here we need add only instructions in regard to the plan of an argument, or what is usually called the brief.

A "brief" for an argument is simply a brief outline of the argument. Its function is to represent the argument in miniature, to contain all the essential elements, to show all the necessary steps of the argument itself. As an argument is a proposition proved, so a brief must always contain two things: (1) the proposition to be proved; (2) the proof. Now, any proof of any proposition can be reduced to the simple form: A is B *because* x is y. If it is not self-evident that x is y, the process of showing why A is B must be carried one step farther: A is B because x is y, and x is y because M is N. If it is not evident that M is N, the process must be carried

[1] See Wendell's *English Composition*, chap. iv.,. or Carpenter's *Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition*, chap. xi.

on still further. A brief, then, is simply a sequence of reasons for a proposition.

For further instruction in the very important art of drawing briefs, and for full examples of good, bad, and indifferent briefs on a variety of subjects, the student should consult Mr. G. P. Baker's pamphlet: *Specimen Briefs* (Harvard Co-operative Society, Second Edition).

21. **Exercise on the Principles of Argument.** — In Argument, as in Exposition, material for discussion is ready at hand in the books, magazines, and papers of the day, and need not be here reprinted. After learning how to draw up a brief for an argument, the student should first practise himself in arranging in the form of a brief several of the arguments reprinted and edited in Mr. G. P. Baker's *Materials for Argumentative Composition* (Henry Holt and Company). The same little book will also be found to contain almost all the matter necessary, in an elementary course, for the illustration of the main principles of argument. The student should then pass on to the drawing up of briefs on subject-matter which he has himself investigated and collected, and to the construction of arguments. He will gain most in such work, if he be subjected as much as possible throughout both processes to the candid criticism of his instructor and his fellow-students.

22. **Persuasion.** — Persuasion may be of two kinds: it may produce its effects by convincing the intellect

or by influencing the emotions. If it be of the first sort, it scarcely differs from Argument ; if of the second, it depends for success upon skill in discovering the dominant mood of the person or persons addressed, and in deftly playing on that mood until it shades off into a state of feeling concordant with that which the writer desires to excite. In so far as Persuasion is argumentative, the student will hardly need a further statement of its elementary principles ; in so far as it depends upon arousing particular emotions, he will gain more by the study of human nature than by any other means. General information as to the principles on which Persuasion is based may be found in the treatment of Force in any good text-book on rhetoric.

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